

700

MODERN ENGLISH AUTHORS
VOL. III.

THE SNOW-IMAGE

BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

AND

DORA AND AGNES

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH AND DORA BY ALFRED TENNYSON.

EDITED WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

BY

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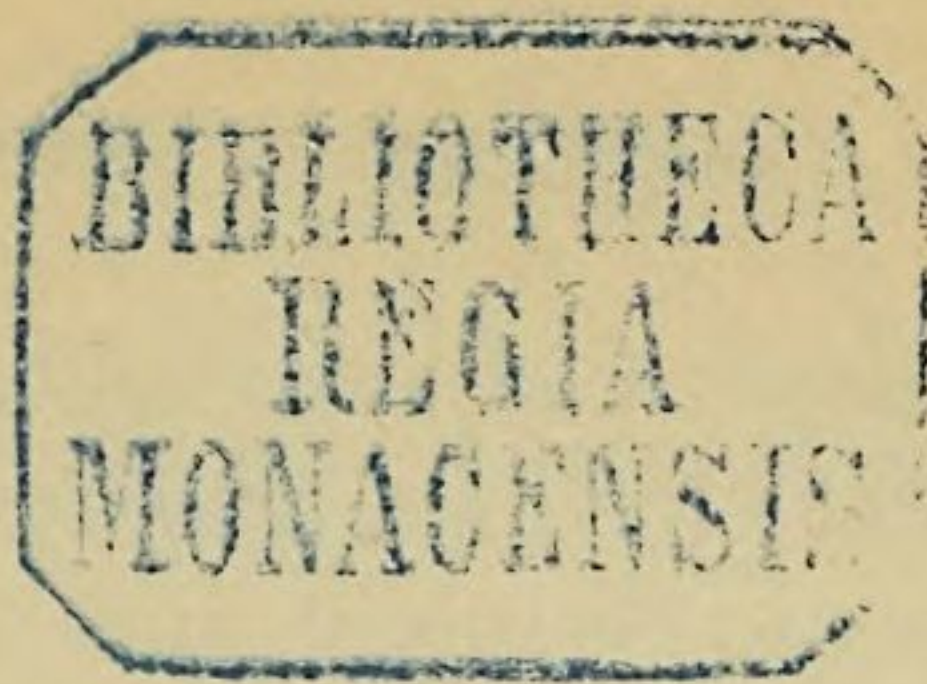
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

(1804—1864.)

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1804, and at the age of seventeen he entered Bowdoin, where he was a class-mate of Longfellow. After graduation, in 1825, he returned to Salem, where he began to write prose tales almost as soon as Longfellow began his poetic career; but he wrote in obscurity and retirement and when he had published his *Twice-told Tales* in 1837 he had scarcely a hearing, whereas the poet was already looked upon as a brilliant author. It was then that Longfellow lent his voice to the praise of his less fortunate friend and class-mate.

Two years afterwards, Hawthorne received from George Bancroft, then Collector of the Port of Boston, a post at the Boston custom house, but was removed in 1841, when his political party went out of power. In the next year he married and settled in the Old Manse at Concord, the residence of Ralph Waldon Emerson, the celebrated American essayist and philosopher.

Here Hawthorne continued to write sketches and stories for the magazines of the day until 1846, when he collected them into one volume entitled *Mosses from an Old Manse*. In this year he returned to Salem where he had been appointed Surveyor of the Port, but three years afterwards was again deprived of office. Thrown upon his own resources, he took from his drawer a romance, *The Scarlet Letter*, which, when published, in 1850, gave him immediate and lasting fame. *The Scarlet Letter* was followed by *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Snow Image*, *The Blithedale Romance* and others.

In 1853 Hawthorne was appointed United States Consul at Liverpool, an office which he held four years. From here he made frequent trips to Scotland and the South of England, of which he has written interesting accounts, gathered into one volume *Our Old Home*. After having spent a year and a half on the Continent, particularly in Paris, Florence and Rome, he returned to America 1860. He died at Concord in 1864 and was buried at the top of a small hill at Sleepy Hollow, where he and his wife were wont to sit in former days.

Hawthorne's writings are intensely interesting; his style is exceedingly fresh, beautiful, and "clear as running water". Washington Irving says of his works: "I have regarded them with admiration as the very best that have ever issued from the American press."

Julian Hawthorne, his son, has also gained some reputation as a novelist and critic.

CHARLES DICKENS.

(1812—1870.)

Charles Dickens was born at Landport, Portsmouth, in Hampshire, in 1812. He was the son of a government clerk, and two years after his birth his family moved to London, and thence to Chatham, where Dickens began his school life, and where he lived until his tenth year.

This was a happy period of his life, but it did not last. The family removed back to London, and as the father was unlucky in business, the burden of poverty grew so heavy that in a few months he was in prison, and the family was so poor in friends that Dickens had to earn his living by covering blacking pots.

He received six shillings a week as wages, and out of this sum he had to support himself and pay for his lodgings to the old lady with whom he lived. Those were dark days for the ten-year-old boy. The home was entirely broken up; everything had been pawned or sold, and Dickens was lonely enough and sad enough to have been made the hero of one of his own novels.

As it was a family trait to look upon the bright side of things, the prison life was not intolerable, and by and by better

days came, and the boy had a couple of years of school life. Then he became office boy in a lawyer's office, and finally, in his seventeenth year, he became a reporter, having learned shorthand in the reading-room of the British Museum.

His career as a writer of fiction began a few years later, when he sent some street sketches to a paper which was too poor to pay for them. It was in this magazine, in 1833, that Dickens first signed the name "Boz" to his contributions. A year later he was regularly employed to supply a number of these sketches to a newspaper, and received good pay for them. The sketches were well liked by the public, and soon afterwards appeared in book form as *Sketches by Boz*.

This led to an offer by a publishing firm for a series of articles to appear with a set of comic drawings they were about to issue, and in 1836, Dickens gave to the world the first part of the famous *Pickwick Papers*. He had formed the idea of making his sketches relate the adventures of an imaginary club of Londoners during sundry visits to the country.

By the time that the sixth number of "Pickwick" was reached, Dickens was famous. He was twenty-five years old, and the world was ready to welcome him as a new writer of unique genius. The next year Dickens produced his first regular novel, *Oliver Twist*, which appeared monthly in a magazine called Bentley's Miscellany, of which Dickens had become the editor.

Oliver Twist struck a new note in fiction, and gave pitch to the life work of the author; for, from this time, his genius never wavered in his purpose, which was the portrayal of the life of the lower classes and the righting of social wrongs.

In his next novel, *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dickens did more than lay bare the evils of the criminal class, which were the more easily exposed because they were the results of open wrong-doing by people who made no pretence of goodness. He attacked that class which, while openly respectable, still treats the unguarded helplessness of childhood in a way that leads to bad results. In this book he exposes that class of cheap schoolmasters whose boarding schools were only abodes of misery for the unhappy pupils.

One of the most popular of Dickens' books is *David Copperfield*, which is written in the form of an autobiography,

and which is supposed to contain many reminiscences of the author's own life.

Among his other works Dickens produced a series of tales from year to year, called the Christmas stories. The most celebrated of the Christmas stories are *A Christmas Carol*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, and *The Chimes*. In these stories Dickens did much more than give to the world interesting tales of domestic life. He really produced a new and beautiful spirit of Christmastide which taught its own sweet lesson of peace and goodwill.

Dickens also wrote *Dombey and Son*; *Martin Chuzzlewit*, a story of American life; *A Tale of two Cities*, a story founded on the French Revolution; *Great Expectations*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Barnaby Rudge*. Besides he was the founder and editor of a magazine *All the Year Round*. He died suddenly in 1870, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Introduction to Dora and Agnes.—The childhood of the hero, *David Copperfield*, is embittered by the cruelty of his step-father, who removes him from the care of his gentle mother and sends him to a boarding school, where he undergoes all the sufferings that an unjust and tyrannical master can inflict. On the death of his mother, David, now ten years of age, is placed in a London warehouse with which his step-father is connected, and employed in the most menial and degrading tasks at a salary of six shillings a week. To escape from this drudgery he appeals to his aunt, Miss Betsey Trotwood, who, touched by the story of her nephew's wrongs, adopts him, under the name of Trotwood Copperfield, and sends him to complete his education at Dr. Strong's school in Canterbury. Here a mutual affection, true and tender as that of brother and sister, springs up between Trotwood and Agnes Wickfield, the daughter of his aunt's lawyer, with whom he resides during his stay in Canterbury. Having chosen the law as his profession he enters the office of Mr. Spenlow in London, and soon after becomes engaged to that gentleman's daughter Dora. Thrown on his own resources by the loss of his aunt's fortune, he learns shorthand and devotes himself to journalism with such success that, by the time he is twenty-one, he is in a position to marry. But, just when his happiness seems complete, it is changed into sorrow by

the untimely death of his child-wife. He seeks to forget his loss in the excitement of foreign travel and after three years absence, returns to England to find that a novel, which he has published during the interval, has made him rich and famous. Amid the scenes of his youth his love for Agnes, whose sympathy has upheld him in his darkest hours, becomes stronger and deeper than ever. At length he makes her his wife and on the evening of her marriage learns from her lips that Dora's dying wish was that Agnes, and Agnes alone might fill her place in her husband's heart and home.

"Of all my books," Dickens says of this favourite child of his fancy, "I like this best." The popular voice has confirmed the verdict: *David Copperfield* has from the first been recognised as the author's masterpiece, the work by which his fame will live longest. It was Thackeray, the rival novelist, who said of Charles Dickens, "I am grateful for the innocent laughter which the author of *David Copperfield* gives to my children."

David Copperfield was the fruit of two years labour; it was published in 1849. The selected passage forms but one sixth of the original.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

(1809—1892.)

If there be truth in the saying: Happy is the nation or individual that has no history then Tennyson must have been a happy man, for his life was as quiet and uneventful as that of Wordsworth; a long unbroken literary triumph, combined with calm domestic happiness.

Alfred Tennyson was born—the third of seven sons—in 1809 at Somerby, Lincolnshire, where his father was Rector of the parish. His career as a poet dates back as far as 1827, when he published in connection with his brother Charles a small volume entitled: *Poems by two Brothers*. In the following year both entered Trinity College Cambridge, where their eldest brother Frederick was already studying.

In 1830 appeared *Poems, chiefly Lyrical* by Alfred Tennyson; a second volume, which was published two years later, contained among others: *The Lady of Shallott, The Miller's Daughter,*

The Lotus Eaters, *Ænone*, and *The May Queen*, all exquisite, and now widely familiar effusions.

After an interval of ten years, in 1842, appeared *English Idylls and other Poems*, in which the splendour and versatility of his genius was fully displayed. *Locksley Hall*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Dora*, *The Lord of Burleigh*, *Godiva*, and *Morte d'Arthur* may particularly be mentioned.

In 1847 appeared, *The Princess, a Medley*, a fantastical metrical romance, abounding in grace and descriptive beauty. Three years after, in 1850, was published *In Memoriam*, of which three editions appeared in one year. It is an elegy on the death of his friend and fellow-student Arthur Hallam who was affianced to the poet's sister. It consists of 131 "short swallow-flights of song" and is the noblest monument ever erected by human love.

The same year, 1850, Alfred Tennyson married Miss Emily Sellwood, a niece of Sir John Franklin, and settled down at Freshwater, near Farringford, in the Isle of Wight. On the death of Wordsworth, the Poet Laureate, Tennyson was selected his successor; his rival for the office having been Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The Poet Laureate was expected to commemorate, not only great national events, but also unusual incidents in the life of the royal family; £300 a year were attached to this dignity.

In 1855 appeared *Maud*, and in 1859 *The Idylls of the King*, forming the first part of an epic, of which King Arthur is the hero, and which is undoubtedly Tennyson's greatest work. This epic refers to the legends of the Knights of the Round Table. Another portion of the Arthurian epic was published in 1869, with the title of *The Holy Grail*, and three years later, in 1872, the epic was completed by *The Last Tournament* and *Gareth and Lynette*.

In 1864 was brought out *Enoch Arden*, a domestic idyll, though dramatic in spirit. It is a sad story sweetly told, full of tender pathos and picturesque description.

In his later years, Tennyson has turned his attention to dramatic poetry; but his *Queen Mary* (Tudor) and *Harold* have had no great success. His last volumes—*Ballads*; *Tiresias*; *Demeter*, and *The Death of Ænone*—contain some of the finest poetry which he has produced. The second *Locksley Hall* and

Crossing the Bar may be especially named. In 1883 he was raised to the peerage, with the title of Baron Tennyson. In 1892 the veteran poet died at the age of eighty-three years.

His death was as peaceful as his life had been. All the members of his family were gathered around him and the still rays of the harvest moon shone on the couch where the dying poet lay. When he breathed his last, the copy of Shakespeare which he had been reading a few hours before was still lying on his breast. He was buried in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey amidst the deepest manifestations of national mourning which had been witnessed in England since the death of Dickens.

The splendid poetry which he has given to the world, has been the product of the most patient elaboration. No English poet, with the exception of Milton, Wordsworth and the Brownings, ever worked with a deeper sense of the divine mission than Tennyson has worked. And he has worked faithfully, earnestly and conscientiously to realize the ideal which he appears to have early possessed.

The Lord of Burleigh.—The events related in this poem are historically true. A young maiden of Shropshire, of the name of Sarah Hoggins, was met and wooed by a young man, who passed for a landscape-painter, but who was in fact the Henry Cecil who succeeded in 1794 to the earldom of Exeter. The marriage took place in 1790. Three children were born to them, but the poor mother, oppressed by the burden of an honour "unto which she was not born" pined and died, after a married life of only six years. Burleigh, near Stamford Town, was the seat of the Cecils.

Dora.—When this poem was first published, in 1842, Alfred Tennyson informed his readers that the story was based up on one of the sketches of country life in Miss Mitford's *Our Village*. The story is there entitled *Dora Cresswell*. Tennyson has, however, considerably modified the concluding incidents of the original, as will be seen by comparing the two.

Crossing the Bar, too sacred for praise or comment, was written in Lord Tennyson's eighty first year, on a day that he crossed the Solent, from Aldworth to Farringford, in the Isle of Wight.

I.

THE SNOW-IMAGE

BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

THE SNOW-IMAGE

BY
JAMES WATSON

THE SNOW-IMAGE.

One afternoon of a cold winter's day, when the sun shone forth with chilly brightness, after a long storm, two children asked leave of their mother to run out and play in the new-fallen snow. The elder child was a little girl, whom, because she was of a tender and 5 modest disposition, and was thought to be very beautiful, her parents, and other people who were familiar with her, used to call Violet. But her brother was known by the style and title of Peony, on account of the ruddiness of his broad and round little phiz, which 10 made everybody think of sunshine and great scarlet flowers. The father of these two children, a certain Mr. Lindsey, it is important to say, was an excellent but exceedingly matter-of-fact sort of man, a dealer in hardware, and was sturdily accustomed to take what 15 is called the common-sense view of all matters that came under his consideration. With a heart about as tender as other people's, he had a head as hard and impenetrable, and therefore, perhaps, as empty, as one of the iron pots which it was a part of his business to 20 sell. The mother's character, on the other hand, had a strain of poetry in it, a trait of unworldly beauty,—a delicate and dewy flower, as it were, that had survived out of her imaginative youth, and still kept itself alive amid the dusty realities of matrimony. 25

So Violet and Peony, as I began with saying, besought their mother to let them run and play in the new snow; for, though it had looked so dreary and dismal, drifting downward out of the gray sky, it had a very cheerful aspect now that the sun was shining 30

on it. The children dwelt in a city, and had no wider play-place than a little garden before the house, divided by a white fence from the street, and with a pear-tree and two or three plum-trees overshadowing it, and some rose-bushes just in front of the parlour windows. The trees and shrubs, however, were now leafless, and their twigs were enveloped in the light snow, which thus made a kind of wintry foliage, with here and there a pendent icicle for the fruit.

10 "Yes, Violet,—yes, my little Peony," said their kind mother; "you may go out and play in the new snow."

Accordingly, the good lady bundled up her darlings in woollen jackets and wadded sacks, and put comforters round their necks, and a pair of striped gaiters on each little pair of legs, and worsted mittens on their hands, and gave them a kiss apiece, by way of a spell to keep away Jack Frost. Forth sallied the two children, with a hop-skip-and-jump that carried them at once into the very heart of a huge snow-drift, whence Violet emerged like a snow-bunting, while little Peony floundered out with his round face in full bloom. Then what a merry time had they! To look at them, frolicking in the wintry garden, you would have thought that the dark and pitiless storm had been sent for no other purpose but to provide a new plaything for Violet and Peony; and that they themselves had been created, as the snow-birds were, to take delight only in the tempest. and in the white mantle which is spread over the earth.

At last, when they had frosted one another all over with handfuls of snow, Violet, after laughing heartily a little Peony's figure, was struck with a new idea.

"You look exactly like a snow-image, Peony," said she, "if your cheeks were not so red. And that puts me in mind! Let us make an image out of snow,—an image of a little girl,—and it shall be our sister, and shall run about and play with us all winter long. Won't it be nice?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Peony, as plainly as he could speak, for he was but a little boy. "That will be nice! And mamma shall see it!"

"Yes," answered Violet; "mamma shall see the new little girl. But she must not make her come into the warm parlour; for, you know, our little snow-sister will not love the warmth."

And forthwith the children began this great business of making a snow-image that should run about: while their mother, who was sitting at the window and overheard some of their talk, could not help smiling at the gravity with which they set about it. They really seemed to imagine that there would be no difficulty whatever in creating a live little girl out of the snow. And, to say the truth, if miracles are ever to be wrought, it will be by putting our hands to the work in precisely such a simple and undoubting frame of mind as that in which Violet and Peony now undertook to perform one, without so much as knowing that it was miracle. So thought the mother; and thought, likewise, that the new snow, just fallen from heaven, would be excellent material to make new beings of, if it were not so very cold. She gazed at the children a moment longer, delighting to watch their little figures, —the girl, tall for her age, graceful and agile, and so delicately coloured that she looked like a cheerful thought, more than a physical reality; while Peony expanded in breadth rather than height, and rolled along on his short and sturdy legs as substantial as an elephant, though not quite so big. Then the mother resumed her work; what it was I forget, but she was either trimming a silken bonnet for Violet, or darning a pair of stockings for little Peony's short legs. Again, however, and again, and yet other agains, she could not help turning her head to the window to see how the children got on with their snow-image.

Indeed, it was an exceedingly pleasant sight, those bright little souls at their tasks! Moreover, it was really wonderful to observe how knowingly and skillfully they managed the matter. Violet assumed the chief direction, and told Peony what to do, while, with her own delicate fingers, she shaped out all the nicer parts of the snow-figure. It seemed, in fact, not so much to

be made by the children, as to grow up under their hands, while they were playing and prattling about it. Their mother was quite surprised at this; and the longer she looked the more and more surprised she grew.

5 "What remarkable children mine are!" thought she, smiling with a mother's pride, and, smiling at herself, too, for being so proud of them. "What other children could have made anything so like a little girl's figure out of snow at the first trial? Well;—but now I
10 must finish Peony's new frock, for his grandfather is coming to-morrow, and I want the little fellow to look handsome."

So she took up the frock, and was soon as busily at work again with her needle as the two children with
15 their snow-image. But still, as the needle travelled hither and thither through the seams of the dress, the mother made her toil light and happy by listening to the airy voices of Violet and Peony. They kept talking to one another all the time, their tongues being
20 quite as active as their feet and hands. Except at intervals, she could not distinctly hear what was said, but had merely a sweet impression that they were in a most loving mood, and were enjoying themselves highly, and that the business of making the snow-
25 image went prosperously on. Now and then, however, when Violet and Peony happened to raise their voices, the words were as audible as if they had been spoken in the very parlour where the mother sat. Oh, how delightfully those words echoed in her heart, even
30 though they meant nothing so very wise or wonderful after all!

But you must know a mother listens with her heart much more than with her ears; and thus she is often delighted with the trills of celestial music, when other
35 people can hear nothing of the kind.

"Peony, Peony!" cried Violet to her brother, who had gone to another part of the garden, "bring me some of that fresh snow, Peony, from the very farthest corner, where we have not been trampling. I
40 want it to shape our little snow-sister's bosom with.

You know that part must be quite pure, just as it came out of the sky!"

"Here it is, Violet!" answered Peony, in his bluff tone, — but a very sweet tone, too, — as he came floundering through the half-trodden drifts. "Here 5 is the snow for her little bosom. O Violet, how beautiful she begins to look!"

"Yes," said Violet, thoughtfully and quietly; "our snow-sister does look very lovely. I did not quite know, Peony, that we could make such a sweet little 10 girl as this."

The mother, as she listened, thought how fit and delightful an incident it would be, if fairies, or, still better, if angel-children were to come from paradise and play invisibly with her own darlings, and help 15 them to make their snow-image, giving it the features of celestial babyhood! Violet and Peony would not be aware of their immortal playmates, — only they would see that the image grew very beautiful while they worked at it, and would think that they themselves 20 had done it all.

"My little girl and boy deserve such playmates, if mortal children ever did!" said the mother to herself; and then she smiled again at her own motherly pride. 25

Nevertheless, the idea seized upon her imagination; and, ever and anon, she took a glimpse out of the window, half dreaming that she might see the golden-haired children of paradise sporting with her own golden-haired Violet and bright cheeked Peony. 30

Now, for a few moments, there was a busy and earnest, but indistinct hum of the two children's voices, as Violet and Peony wrought together with one happy consent. Violet still seemed to be the guiding spirit, while Peony acted rather as a labourer, and brought 35 her the snow from far and near. And yet the little urchin evidently had a proper understanding of the matter, too!

"Peony, Peony!" cried Violet; for her brother was again at the other side of the garden. "Bring me those 40

light wreaths of snow that have rested on the lower branches of the pear-tree. You can clamber on the snow-drift, Peony, and reach them easily. I must have them to make some ringlets for our snow-sister's head."

5 "Here they are, Violet!" answered the little boy. "Take care you do not break them. Well done! Well done! How pretty!"

"Does she not look sweetly?" said Violet, with a very satisfied tone; "and now we must have some little
10 shining bits of ice, to make the brightness of her eyes. She is not finished yet. Mamma will see how very beautiful she is; but papa will say, 'Tush! nonsense!—come in out of the cold!'"

"Let us call mamma to look out," said Peony; and
15 then he shouted lustily, "Mamma! mamma!! mamma!!! Look out and see what a nice little girl we are making!"

The mother put down her work, for an instant, and looked out of the window. But it so happened that
20 the sun—for this was one of the shortest days of the whole year—had sunken so nearly to the edge of the world that his setting shine came obliquely into the lady's eyes. So she was dazzled, you must understand, and could not very distinctly observe what was
25 in the garden. Still, however, through all that bright, blinding dazzle of the sun and the new snow she beheld a small white figure in the garden that seemed to have a wonderful deal of human likeness about it. And she saw Violet and Peony,—indeed, she looked
30 more at them than at the image,—she saw the two children still at work; Peony bringing fresh snow, and Violet applying it to the figure as scientifically as a sculptor adds clay to his model. Indistinctly as she discerned the snow-child, the mother thought to her-
35 self that never before was there a snow-figure so cunningly made, nor ever such a dear little girl and boy to make it.

"They do everything better than other children," said she, very complacently. "No wonder they make
40 better snow-images!"

She sat down again to the work, and made as much haste with it as possible; because twilight would soon come, and Peony's frock was not yet finished, and grandfather was expected, by railroad, pretty early in the morning. Faster and faster, therefore, went her flying fingers. The children, likewise, kept busily at work in the garden, and still the mother listened, whenever she could catch a word. She was amused to observe how their little imaginations had got mixed up with what they were doing, and were carried away by it. They seemed positively to think that the snow-child would run about and play with them.

"What a nice playmate she will be for us, all winter long!" said Violet. "I hope papa will not be afraid of her giving us a cold! Shan't you love her dearly, Peony?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Peony. "And I will hug her, and she shall sit down close by me, and drink some of my warm milk!"

"Oh, no, Peony," answered Violet, with grave wisdom. "That will not do at all. Warm milk will not be wholesome for our little snow-sister. Little snow-people, like her, eat nothing but icicles. No, no, Peony, we must not give her anything warm to drink!"

There was a minute or two of silence; for Peony, whose short legs were never weary, had gone on a pilgrimage again to the other side of the garden. All of a sudden Violet cried out, loudly and joyfully,—

"Look here, Peony! Come quickly! A light has been shining on her cheek out of that rose-coloured cloud! and the colour does not go away! Is not that beautiful?"

"Yes; it is beautiful," answered Peony, pronouncing the three syllables with deliberate accuracy. "O Violet, only look at her hair! It is all like gold!"

"Oh certainly," said Violet, with tranquillity, as if it were very much a matter of course. "That colour, you know, comes from the golden clouds that we see up there in the sky. She is almost finished now. But her lips must be made very red,—redder than her

cheeks. Perhaps, Peony, it will make them red if we both kiss them!"

Accordingly, the mother heard two smart little smacks, as if both her children were kissing the snow-
5 image on its frozen mouth. But as this did not seem to make the lips quite red enough, Violet next proposed that the snow-child should be invited to kiss Peony's scarlet cheek.

"Come, 'ittle snow-sister, kiss me!" cried Peony.

10 "There! she has kissed you," added Violet "and now her lips are very red. And she blushed a little, too!"

"Oh, what a cold kiss!" cried Peony.

Just then came a breeze of the pure west-wind,
15 sweeping through the garden and rattling the parlour windows. It sounded so wintry cold that the mother was about to tap on the window-pane with her thimble finger, to summon the two children in, when they both cried out to her with one voice. The tone was not a
20 tone of surprise, although they were evidently a good deal excited; it appeared rather as if they were very much rejoiced at some event that had now happened, but which they had been looking for, and had reckoned upon all along.

25 "Mamma! mamma! We have finished our little snow-sister, and she is running about the garden with us!"

"What imaginative little beings my children are!" thought the mother, putting the last few stitches into Peony's frock. "And it is strange, too, that they make
30 me almost as much a child as they themselves are! I can hardly help believing, now, that the snow-image has really come to life!"

"Dear mamma!" cried Violet, "pray look out and see what a sweet playmate we have!"

35 The mother, being thus entreated, could no longer delay to look forth from the window. The sun was now gone out of the sky, leaving, however, a rich inheritance of his brightness among those purple and golden clouds which make the sunsets of winter so
40 magnificent. But there was not the slightest gleam or

dazzle, either on the window or on the snow; so that the good lady could look all over the garden, and see everything and everybody in it. And what do you think she saw there? Violet and Peony, of course, her own two darling children. Ah, but whom or what did she see besides? Why, if you will believe me, there was a small figure of a girl, dressed all in white, with rose-tinged cheeks and ringlets of golden hue, playing about the garden with the two children! A stranger though she was, the child seemed to be on as familiar terms with Violet and Peony, and they with her, as if all the three had been playmates during the whole of their little lives. The mother thought to herself that it must certainly be the daughter of one of the neighbours, and that, seeing Violet and Peony in the garden, the child had run across the street to play with them. So this kind lady went to the door, intending to invite the little runaway into her comfortable parlour; for, now that the sunshine was withdrawn, the atmosphere out of doors was already growing very cold. 20

But, after opening the house-door, she stood an instant on the threshold, hesitating whether she ought to ask the child to come in, or whether she should even speak to her. Indeed, she almost doubted whether it were a real child, after all, or only a light wreath of the new-fallen snow, blown hither and thither about the garden by the intensely cold west-wind. There was certainly something very singular in the aspect of the little stranger. Among all the children of the neighbourhood, the lady could remember no such face, with its pure white, and delicate rose-colour, and the golden ringlets tossing about the forehead and cheeks. And as for her dress, which was entirely of white, and fluttering in the breeze, it was such as no reasonable woman would put upon a little girl, when sending her out to play, in the depth of winter. It made this kind and careful mother shiver only to look at those small feet, with nothing in the world on them except a very thin pair of white slippers. Nevertheless, airily as she was clad, the child seemed to feel not the slightest in- 40

convenience from the cold, but danced so lightly over the snow that the tips of her toes left hardly a print in its surface; while Violet could but just keep pace with her, and Peony's short legs compelled him to lag
5 behind.

Once, in the course of their play, the strange child placed herself between Violet and Peony, and taking a hand of each, skipped merrily forward, and they along with her. Almost immediately, however, Peony
10 pulled away his little fist, and began to rub it as if the fingers were tingling with cold; while Violet also released herself, though with less abruptness, gravely remarking that it was better not to take hold of hands. The white-robed damsel said not a word, but danced
15 about, just as merrily as before. If Violet and Peony did not choose to play with her, she could make just as good a playmate of the brisk and cold west-wind, which kept blowing her all about the garden, and took such liberties with her that they seemed to have been
20 friends for a long time. All this while the mother stood on the threshold, wondering how a little girl could look so much like a flying snow-drift, or how a snow-drift could look so very like a little girl.

She called Violet, and whispered to her.

25 "Violet, my darling, what is this child's name?" asked she. "Does she live near us?"

"Why, dearest mamma," answered Violet, laughing to think that her mother did not comprehend so very plain an affair, "this is our little snow-sister, whom we
30 have just been making!"

"Yes, dear mamma," cried Peony, running to his mother, and looking up simply into her face. "This is our snow-image! Is it not a nice 'ittle child?"

At this instant a flock of snow-birds came flitting
35 through the air. As was very natural, they avoided Violet and Peony. But—and this looked strange—they flew at once to the white-robed child, fluttered eagerly about her head, alighted on her shoulders, and seemed to claim her as an old acquaintance. She, on her part, was evidently as glad to see these little birds, old

Winter's grandchildren, as they were to see her, and welcomed them by holding out both her hands. Hereupon, they each and all tried to alight on her two palms and ten small fingers and thumbs, crowding one another off, with an immense fluttering of their tiny wings. One dear little bird nestled tenderly in her bosom; another put its bill to her lips. They were as joyous, all the while, and seemed as much in their element as you may have seen them when sporting with a snow-storm. 5 10

Violet and Peony stood laughing at this pretty sight; for they enjoyed the merry time which their new playmate was having with these small-winged visitants almost as much as if they themselves took part in it. 15

"Violet," said her mother, greatly perplexed, "tell me the truth, without any jest. Who is this little girl?"

"My darling mamma," answered Violet, looking seriously into her mother's face, and apparently surprised that she should need any further explanation, 20 "I have told you truly who she is. It is our little snow-image, which Peony and I have been making. Peony will tell you so, as well as I."

"Yes, mamma," asseverated Peony, with much gravity in his crimson little phiz; this is 'ittle snow-child. 25 Is not she a nice one? But, mamma, her hand is, oh, so very cold!"

While mamma still hesitated what to think and what to do, the street-gate was thrown open, and the father of Violet and Peony appeared, wrapped in a pilot-cloth sack, with a fur cap drawn down over his ears, and the thickest of gloves upon his hands. Mr. Lindsey was a middle-aged man, with a weary and yet a happy look in his wind-flushed and frost-pinched face, as if he had been busy all the day long, and was glad to get back to his quiet home. His eyes brightened at the sight of his wife and children, although he could not help uttering a word or two of surprise at finding the whole family in the open air, on so bleak a day, and after sunset too. He soon perceived the 35 40

little white stranger, sporting to and fro in the garden, like a dancing snow-wreath, a flock of snow-birds fluttering about her head.

“Pray, what little girl may that be?” inquired this
5 very sensible man. “Surely her mother must be crazy, to let her go out in such bitter weather as it has been to-day, with only that flimsy white gown and those thin slippers!”

“My dear husband,” said his wife, “I know no
10 more about the little thing than you do. Some neighbour’s child, I suppose. Our Violet and Peony,” she added, laughing at herself for repeating so absurd a story, “insist that she is nothing but a snow-image, which they have been busy about in the garden almost
15 all the afternoon.”

As she said this, the mother glanced her eyes toward the spot where the children’s snow-image had been made. What was her surprise, on perceiving that there was not the slightest trace of so much labour!—
20 no image at all!—no piled-up heap of snow!—nothing whatever save the prints of little footsteps around a vacant space!

“This is very strange!” said she.

“What is strange, dear mother?” asked Violet.
25 “Dear father, do not you see how it is? This is our snow-image, which Peony and I have made, because we wanted another playmate. Did not we, Peony?”

“Yes, papa,” said crimson Peony. “This be our
’ittle snow-sister. Is she not beau-ti-ful? But she gave
30 me such a cold kiss!”

“Poh, nonsense, children!” cried their good honest father, who, as we have already intimated, had an exceedingly common-sensible way of looking at matters. “Do not tell me of making live figures out of
35 snow. Come, wife: this little stranger must not stay out in the bleak air a moment longer. We will bring her into the parlour; and you shall give her a supper of warm bread and milk, and make her as comfortable as you can. Meanwhile, I will inquire among the

neighbours; or, if necessary, send the city crier about the streets, to give notice of a lost child."

So saying, this honest and very kind-hearted man was going toward the little white damsel, with the best intentions in the world. But Violet and Peony, each 5 seizing their father by the hand, earnestly besought him not to make her come in.

"Dear father," cried Violet, putting herself before him, "it is true what I have been telling you! This is our little snow-girl, and she cannot live any longer than 10 while she breathes the cold west-wind. Do not make her come into the hot room!"

"Yes, father," shouted Peony, stamping his little foot, so mightily was he in earnest, "this be nothing but our 'ittle snow-child! She will not love the hot 15 fire!"

"Nonsense, children, nonsense, nonsense!" cried the father, half vexed, half laughing at what he considered their foolish obstinacy. "Run into the house, this moment! It is too late to play any longer now. I must 20 take care of this little girl immediately, or she will catch her death-a-cold!"

"Husband! dear husband!" said his wife, in a low voice,—for she had been looking narrowly at the snow-child, and was more perplexed than ever,— 25 "there is something very singular in all this. You will think me foolish,—but—but—may it not be that some invisible angel has been attracted by the simplicity and good-faith with which our children set about their undertaking? May he not have spent an hour of his im- 30 mortality in playing with those dear little souls? and so the result is what we call a miracle. No, no! Do not laugh at me; I see what a foolish thought it is!"

"My dear wife," replied the husband, laughing heartily, "you are as much a child as Violet and 35 Peony."

And in one sense so she was; for all through life she had kept her heart full of childlike simplicity and faith, which was as pure and clear as crystal; and, looking at all matters through this transparent medium, 40

she sometimes saw truths so profound that other people laughed at them as nonsense and absurdity.

But now kind Mr. Lindsey had entered the garden, breaking away from his two children, who still sent
5 their shrill voices after him, beseeching him to let the snow-child stay and enjoy herself in the cold west-wind. As he approached, the snow-birds took to flight. The little white damsel, also, fled backward, shaking her head, as if to say, "Pray do not touch me!" and ro-
10 guishly, as it appeared, leading him through the deepest of the snow. Once, the good man stumbled, and floundered down upon his face, so that, gathering himself up again, with the snow sticking to his rough pilot-cloth sack, he looked as white and wintry as a
15 snow-image of the largest size. Some of the neighbours, meanwhile, seeing him from their windows, wondered what could possess poor Mr. Lindsey to be running about his garden in pursuit of a snow-drift, which the west-wind was driving hither and thither! At length,
20 after a vast deal of trouble, he chased the little stranger into a corner, where she could not possibly escape him. His wife had been looking on, and, it being nearly twilight, was wonder-struck to observe how the snow-child gleamed and sparkled, and how she seemed to
25 shed a glow all round about her; and when driven into the corner, she positively glistened like a star! It was a frosty kind of brightness, too, like that of an icicle in the moonlight. The wife thought it strange that good Mr. Lindsey should see nothing remarkable in the
30 snow-child's appearance.

"Come, you odd little thing!" cried the honest man, seizing her by the hand, "I have caught you at last, and will make you comfortable in spite of yourself. We will put a nice, warm pair of worsted stock-
35 ings on your frozen little feet, and you shall have a good thick shawl to wrap yourself in. Your poor white nose, I am afraid, is actually frost-bitten. But we will make it all right. Come along in."

And so, with a most benevolent smile on his sagacious visage, all purple as it was with the cold, this
40

very well-meaning gentleman took the snow-child by the hand and led her towards the house. She followed him, droopingly and reluctant; for all the glow and sparkle was gone out of her figure; and whereas just before she had resembled a bright, frosty, star-gemmed 5 evening, with a crimson gleam on the cold horizon, she now looked as dull and languid as a thaw. As kind Mr. Lindsey led her up the steps of the door, Violet and Peony looked into his face,—their eyes full of tears, which froze before they could run down their cheeks, 10 —and again entreated him not to bring their snow-image into the house.

“Not bring her in!” exclaimed the kind-hearted man. “Why, you are crazy, my little Violet!—quite crazy, my small Peony! She is so cold, already, that 15 her hand has almost frozen mine, in spite of my thick gloves. Would you have her freeze to death?”

His wife, as he came up the steps, had been taking another long, earnest, almost awe-stricken gaze at the little white stranger. She hardly knew whether it was 20 a dream or not; but she could not help fancying that she saw the delicate print of Violet’s fingers on the child’s neck. It looked as if, while Violet was shaping out the image, she had given it a gentle pat with her hand, and had neglected to smooth the impression 25 quite away.

“After all, husband,” said the mother, recurring to her idea that the angels would be as much delighted to play with Violet and Peony as she herself was,—“after all, she does look strangely like a snow-image! 30 I do believe she is made out of snow!”

A puff of the west-wind blew against the snow-child, and again she sparkled like a star.

“Snow!” repeated good Mr. Lindsey, drawing the reluctant guest over his hospitable threshold. “No 35 wonder she looks like snow. She is half frozen, poor little thing! But a good fire will put everything to rights.”

Without further talk, and always with the same best intentions, this highly benevolent and common-sensible individual led the little white damsel—drooping, 40

drooping, drooping, more and more—out of the frosty air, into his comfortable parlour. A Heidenberg stove, filled to the brim with intensely burning anthracite, was sending a bright gleam through the isinglass of its iron door, 5 and causing the vase of water on its top to fume and bubble with excitement. A warm, sultry smell was diffused throughout the room. A thermometer on the wall farthest from the stove stood at eighty degrees. The parlour was hung with red curtains, and covered 10 with a red carpet, and looked just as warm as it felt. The difference betwixt the atmosphere here and the cold, wintry twilight out of doors, was like stepping at once from Nova Zembla to the hottest part of India, or from the North Pole into an oven. Oh, this was a fine place 15 for the little white stranger!

The common-sensible man placed the snow-child on the hearth-rug, right in front of the hissing and fuming stove.

“Now she will be comfortable!” cried Mr. Lindsey, 20 rubbing his hands and looking about him with the pleasantest smile you ever saw. “Make yourself at home, my child.”

Sad, sad and drooping, looked the little white maiden, as she stood on the hearth-rug, with the hot blast of 25 the stove striking through her like a pestilence. Once, she threw a glance wistfully towards the windows, and caught a glimpse, through its red curtains, of the snow-covered roofs, and the stars glimmering frostily, and all the delicious intensity of the cold night. The bleak wind 30 rattled the window-panes, as if it were summoning her to come forth. But there stood the snow-child, drooping before the hot stove!

But the common-sensible man saw nothing amiss.

“Come, wife,” said he, “let her have a pair of thick 35 stockings and a woollen shawl or blanket directly; and tell Dora to give her some warm supper as soon as the milk boils. You, Violet and Peony, amuse your little friend. She is out of spirits, you see, at finding herself in a strange place. For my part, I will go round 40 among the neighbours, and find out where she belongs.”

The mother, meanwhile, had gone in search of the shawl and stockings; for her own view of the matter, however subtle and delicate, had given way, as it always did, to the stubborn materialism of her husband. Without heeding the remonstrances of his two children, 5 who still kept murmuring that their little snow-sister did not love the warmth, good Mr. Lindsey took his departure, shutting the parlour-door carefully behind him. Turning up the collar of his sack over his ears, he emerged from the house, and had barely reached the 10 street-gate, when he was recalled by the screams of Violet and Peony, and the rapping of a thimble finger against the parlour window.

"Husband! husband!" cried his wife, showing her horror-stricken face through the window-panes. "There 15 is no need of going for the child's parents!"

"We told you so, father!" screamed Violet and Peony, as he re-entered the parlour. "You would bring her in; and now our poor—dear—beau-ti-ful little snow-sister is thawed!" 20

And their own sweet little faces were already dissolved in tears; so that their father, seeing what strange things occasionally happen in this every-day world, felt not a little anxious lest his children might be going to thaw too! In the utmost perplexity, he 25 demanded an explanation of his wife. She could only reply, that, being summoned to the parlour by the cries of Violet and Peony, she found no trace of the little white maiden, unless it were the remains of a heap of snow, which, while she was gazing at it, melted quite 30 away upon the hearth-rug.

"And there you see all that is left of it!" added she, pointing to a pool of water in front of the stove.

"Yes, father," said Violet, looking reproachfully at him, through her tears, "there is all that is left of our 35 dear little snow-sister!"

"Naughty father!" cried Peony, stamping his foot, and—I shudder to say—shaking his little fist at the common-sensible man. "We told you how it would be! What for did you bring her in?" 40

And the Heidenberg stove, through the isinglass of its door, seemed to glare at poor Mr. Lindsey, like a red-eyed demon, triumphing in the mischief which it had done!

5 This, you will observe, was one of those rare cases, which yet will occasionally happen, where common-sense finds itself at fault. The remarkable story of the snow-image, though to that sagacious class of people to whom good Mr. Lindsey belongs it may seem
10 but a childish affair, is, nevertheless, capable of being moralized in various methods, greatly for their edification. One of its lessons, for instance, might be, that it behoves men, and especially men of benevolence, to consider well what they are about, and, before acting
15 on their philanthropic purposes, to be quite sure that they comprehend the nature and all the relations of the business in hand. What has been established as an element of good to one being may prove absolute mischief to another; even as the warmth of the parlour
20 was proper enough for children of flesh and blood, like Violet and Peony,—though by no means very wholesome, even for them,—but involved nothing short of annihilation to the unfortunate snow-image.

But, after all, there is no teaching anything to wise
25 men of good Mr. Lindsey's stamp. They know everything,—oh, to be sure!—everything that has been, and everything that is, and everything that, by any future possibility, can be. And, should some phenomenon of nature or providence transcend their system, they will
30 not recognize it, even if it come to pass under their very noses.

"Wife," said Mr. Lindsey, after a fit of silence, "see what a quantity of snow the children have brought in on their feet! It has made quite a puddle here be-
35 fore the stove. Pray tell Dora to bring some towels and sop it up!"

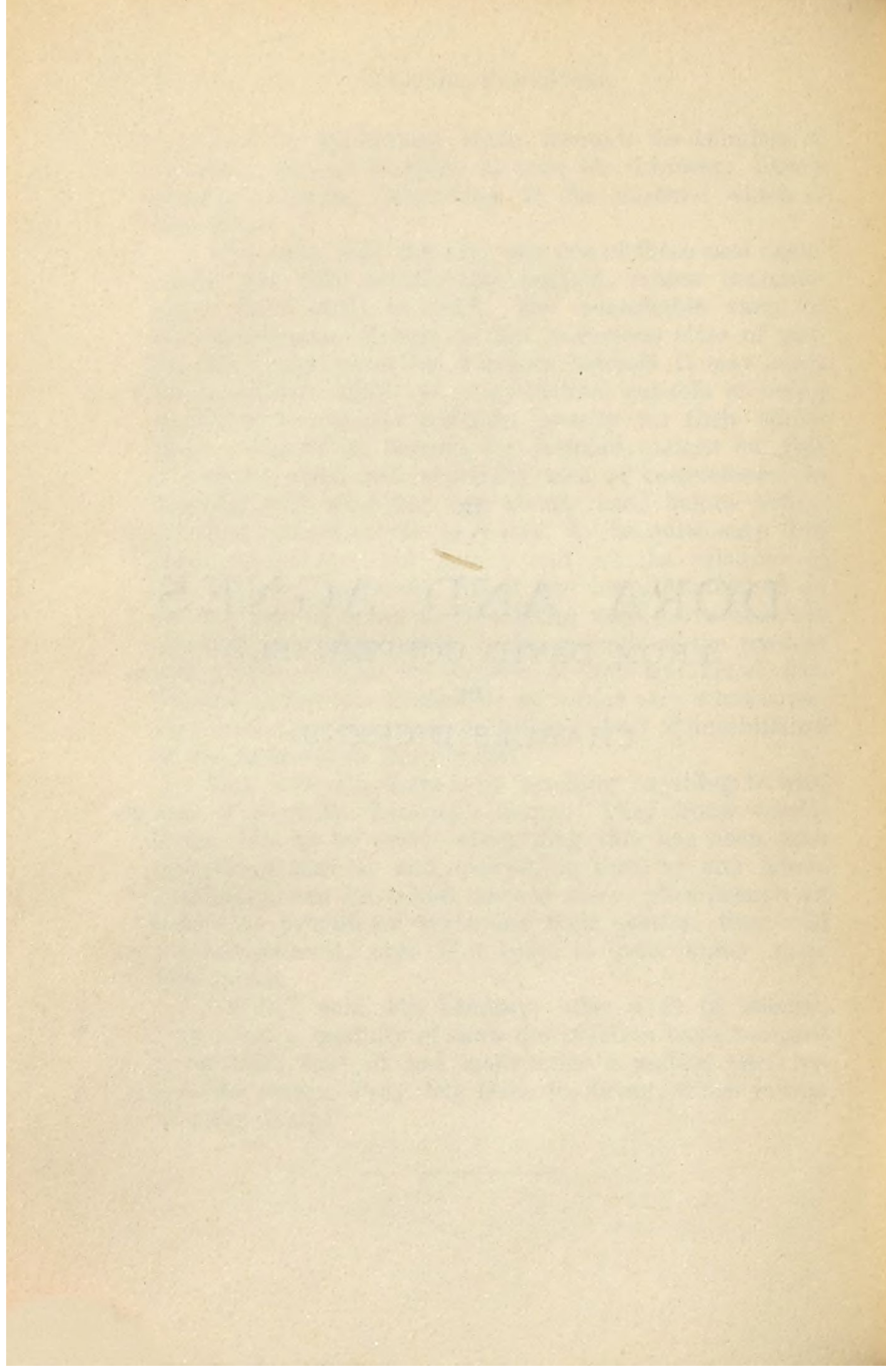
II.

DORA AND AGNES

FROM DAVID COPPERFIELD

BY

CHARLES DICKENS.



DORA.

On the day when I was articled, Mr. Spenlow remarked, that he should have been happy to have seen me at his house at Norwood to celebrate our becoming connected, but for his domestic arrangements being in some disorder on account of the expected 5 return of his daughter from finishing her education at Paris. But he intimated that when she came home he should hope to have the pleasure of entertaining me. I knew that he was a widower with one daughter, and expressed my acknowledgments. 10

Mr. Spenlow was as good as his word. In a week or two he referred to this engagement, and said that, if I would do him the favour to come down next Saturday, and stay till Monday, he would be extremely happy. Of course, I said I *would* do him the favour; and he was 15 to drive me down in his phaeton, and to bring me back.

There was a lovely garden to Mr. Spenlow's house; and, though that was not the best time of the year for seeing a garden, it was so beautifully kept that I was 20 quite enchanted. There was a charming lawn, there were clusters of trees, and there were perspective walks that I could just distinguish in the dark, arched over with trellis-work, on which shrubs and flowers grew in the growing season. "Here Miss Spenlow walks by 25 herself," I thought. "Dear me!"

We went into the house, which was cheerfully lighted up, and into a hall where there were all sorts of hats, caps, great-coats, plaids, gloves, whips, and walking-sticks. "Where is Miss Dora?" said Mr. Spenlow 30

to the servant. "Dora!" I thought. "What a beautiful name!"

We turned into a room near at hand, and I heard a voice say, "Mr. Copperfield, my daughter Dora." It was, no doubt, Mr. Spenlow's voice, but I didn't know it, and I didn't care whose it was. All was over in a moment—I had fulfilled my destiny.

All I know of the rest of the evening is that I heard Miss Dora sing enchanted ballads in the French language, generally to the effect that, whatever was the matter, we ought always to dance, Ta ra la, Ta ra la! accompanying herself on a glorified instrument resembling a guitar.

The next morning was fine, and I thought I would go and take a stroll. On my way through the hall I encountered her little dog, who was called Jip—short for Gipsy. I approached him tenderly, for I loved even him; but he showed his whole set of teeth, got under a chair expressly to snarl, and wouldn't hear of the least familiarity.

The garden was cool and solitary. I had not been walking long, when I turned a corner, and met her. I walked about, wondering what my feelings of happiness would be if I could ever become engaged to this dear wonder.

"You—are—out early, Miss Spenlow," said I.

"It's so stupid at home," she replied. "On a Sunday morning, when I don't practise, I must do something. So I told papa last night I *must* come out. Besides, it's the brightest time of the whole day. Don't you think so?"

I hazarded a bold flight, and said (not without stammering) that it was very bright to me then, though it had been very dark to me a minute before.

"Do you mean a compliment," said Dora, "or that the weather has really changed?"

I stammered worse than before, in replying that I meant no compliment, but the plain truth; though I was not aware of any change having taken place in the

weather. It was in the state of my own feelings I added, bashfully, to clench the explanation.

I never saw such curls—how could I, for there never were such curls!—as those she shook out to hide her blushes. As to the straw hat and blue ribbons¹⁵ which was on the top of the curls, if I could only have hung it up in my room in Buckingham Street, what a priceless possession it would have been!

Jip was mortally jealous of me and persisted in barking at me. She took him up in her arms, and¹⁰ caressed him, but he insisted upon barking still. He wouldn't let me touch him, when I tried; and then she beat him. It increased my sufferings greatly to see the pats she gave him for punishment on the bridge of his blunt nose, while he winked his eyes, and licked¹⁵ her hand, and still growled within himself like a little double-bass. At length he was quiet—well he might be, with her dimpled chin upon his head!—and we walked away to look at a greenhouse.

It contained quite a show of beautiful geraniums.²⁰ We loitered along in front of them, and Dora often stopped to admire this one or that one, and I stopped to admire the same one, and Dora, laughing, held the dog up, childishly, to smell the flowers; and if we were not all three in Fairyland, certainly *I* was.²⁵ The scent of a geranium-leaf, at this day, strikes me with a half-comical half-serious wonder as to what change has come over me in a moment; and then I see a straw hat and blue ribbons, and a quantity of curls, and a little black dog being held up, in two slender³⁰ arms, against a bank of blossoms and bright leaves.

By-and-by we went to church. A sermon was delivered—about Dora, of course—and I am afraid that is all I know of the service.

We had a quiet day. No company. a walk, a³⁵ family dinner, and an evening of looking over books and pictures. Ah! little did Mr. Spenlow imagine, when he sat opposite to me after dinner that day, with his pocket-handkerchief over his head, how fervently I was embracing him, in my fancy, as his son-⁴⁰

in-law! Little did he think, when I took leave of him at night, that he had just given his full consent to my being engaged to Dora, and that I was invoking blessings on his head.

5 We departed early in the morning, for we had a case coming on in the Admiralty Court. Dora was at the breakfast-table to make the tea again, however; and I had the melancholy pleasure of taking off my hat to her in the phaeton, as she stood on the doorstep, with
10 Jip in her arms.

COURTSHIP.

1.

It came about that Mr. Spenlow told me that a certain day was Dora's birthday, and he would be glad if I would come down and join a little picnic on the occasion.

20 I think I committed every possible absurdity, in the way of preparation for this blessed event. I blush when I remember the cravat I bought. My boots might be placed in any collection of instruments of torture. I provided, and sent down by the Norwood coach the
25 night before, a delicate little hamper, amounting in itself, I thought, almost to a declaration. There were crackers in it with the tenderest mottos that could be got for money. At six in the morning, I was in Covent Garden Market, buying a bouquet for Dora. At ten I
30 was on horseback (I hired a gallant grey, for the occasion), with the bouquet in my hat, to keep it fresh, trotting down to Norwood.

I suppose that when I saw Dora in the garden and pretended not to see her, and rode past the house pre-
35 tending to be anxiously looking for it, I committed two small fooleries which other young gentlemen in my circumstances might have committed—because they came so very natural to me. But oh! when I did find the house, and did dismount at the garden gate, and drag
40 those stony-hearted boots across the lawn to Dora sitting

on a garden seat under a lilac tree, what a spectacle she was, upon that beautiful morning, among the butterflies, in a white chip bonnet and a dress of celestial blue!

There was a young lady with her—comparatively 5 stricken in years—almost twenty, I should say. Her name was Miss Mills, and Dora called her Julia. She was the bosom friend of Dora. Happy Miss Mills!

Jip was there, and Jip would bark at me again. When I presented my bouquet, he gnashed his teeth 10 with jealousy. Well he might. If he had the least idea how I adored his mistress, well he might!

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Copperfield! What dear flowers!” said Dora.

Then Dora held my flowers to Jip to smell. Then 15 Jip growled, and wouldn't smell them. Then Dora laughed, and held them a little closer to Jip, to make him. Then Jip laid hold of a bit of geranium with his teeth, and worried imaginary cats in it. Then Dora beat him, and said: “My poor beautiful flowers!” as 20 compassionately, I thought, as if Jip had laid hold of me. I wished he had!

But now Mr. Spenlow came out of the house, and Dora went to him, saying: “Look, papa, what beautiful flowers!” And we all walked from the lawn towards the 25 carriage, which was getting ready.

I shall never have such a ride again. I have never had such another. There were only those three, their hamper, my hamper, and the guitar-case, in the phaeton; and, of course, the phaeton was open; and I rode behind 30 it, and Dora sat with her back to the horses, looking towards me. She kept the bouquet close to her on the cushion, and wouldn't allow Jip to sit on that side of her at all, for fear he should crush it. She often carried it in her hand, often refreshed herself with its 35 fragrance. Our eyes at those times often met; and my great astonishment is that I didn't go over the head of my gallant grey into the carriage....

I was happier than ever when the party broke up, and the other people went their several ways, and we 40

went ours through the still evening and the dying light, with sweet scents rising up around us. Dora admired my horse and patted him—oh, what a dear little hand it looked upon a horse!—and her shawl would not keep
5 right, and now and then I drew it round her with my arm; and I even fancied that Jip began to see how it was, and to understand that he must make up his mind to be friends with me.

“Mr. Copperfield,”—said Miss Mills, “come to this
10 side of the carriage a moment—if you can spare a moment. I want to speak to you.”

Behold me, on my gallant grey, bending at the side of Miss Mills, with my hand upon the carriage door!

“Dora is coming to stay with me. She is coming
15 home with me the day after to-morrow. If you would like to call, I am sure papa would be happy to see you.”

What could I do but invoke a silent blessing on Miss Mill’s head, and store Miss Mill’s address in the securest corner of my memory! What could I do but
20 tell Miss Mills, with grateful looks and fervent words, how much I appreciated her good offices, and what an inestimable value I set upon her friendship!

Then Miss Mills benignantly dismissed me, saying: “Go back to Dora!” and I went; and Dora leaned out
25 of the carriage to talk to me, and we talked all the rest of the way. Norwood was many miles too near, and we reached it many hours too soon. At length we parted; I riding all the way to London with the farewell touch of Dora’s hand still light on mine, recalling
30 every incident and word ten thousand times.

When I awoke next morning, I was resolute to declare my passion to Dora, and know my fate. Happiness or misery was now the question. There was no other question that I knew of in the world, and only
35 Dora could give the answer to it. I passed three days in a luxury of wretchedness, torturing myself by putting every conceivable variety of discouraging construction on all that ever had taken place between Dora and me. At last, arrayed for the purpose at a vast expense, I
40 went to Miss Mills’s, fraught with a declaration.

How many times I went up and down the street, and round the square before I could persuade myself to go up the steps and knock, is no matter now.

Mr. Mills was not at home. I did not expect he would be. Nobody wanted him. Miss Mills was at home. Miss Mills would do. 5

I was shown into a room up-stairs, where Miss Mills and Dora were. Jip was there. Miss Mills was copying music, and Dora was painting flowers. What were my feelings, when I recognised my own flowers, the identical Covent Garden Market purchase! I cannot say that they were very like, or that they particularly resembled any flowers that have ever come under my observation, but I knew from the paper round them, which was accurately copied, what the composition was. 15

Miss Mills was very glad to see me, and very sorry her papa was not at home: though I thought we all bore that with fortitude. Miss Mills was conversational for a few minutes, and then, laying down her pen, got up, and left the room. 20

“Jip, you naughty boy, come here!” said Dora.

I don't know how I did it. I did it in a moment. I intercepted Jip. I had Dora in my arms. I was full of eloquence. I never stopped for a word. I told her how I loved her. I told her I should die without her. I told her that I idolised and worshipped her. Jip barked madly all the time. 25

When Dora hung her head and cried, and trembled, my eloquence increased so much the more. If she would like me to die for her, she had but to say the word, and I was ready. Life without Dora's love was not a thing to have on any terms. I couldn't bear it and I wouldn't, I had loved her every minute, day and night, since I first saw her. I loved her at that minute, to distraction. I should always love her, every minute to distraction. Lovers had loved before, and lovers would love again; but no lover had ever loved, might, could, would, or should ever love, as I loved Dora. The more I raved, the more Jip barked. Each of us, in his own way, got more mad every moment. 40

Well, well! Dora and I were sitting on the sofa by-and-by, quiet enough, and Jip was lying in her lap, winking peacefully at me. It was off my mind. I was in a state of perfect rapture. Dora and I were engaged.

5 I suppose we had some notion that this was to end in marriage. We must have had some, because Dora stipulated that we were never to be married without her papa's consent. But, in our youthful ecstasy, I don't think that we really looked before us or behind
10 us, or had any aspiration beyond the ignorant present. We were to keep our secret from Mr. Spenlow; but I am sure the idea never entered my head, then, that there was anything dishonourable in that.

Miss Mills was more than usually pensive when
15 Dora, going to find her, brought her back;—I apprehend, because there was a tendency in what had passed to awaken the slumbering echoes in the caverns of Memory. But she gave us her blessing, and the assurance of her lasting friendship, and spoke to us, generally, as became
20 a Voice from the Cloister.

What an idle time it was! What an unsubstantial, happy, foolish time it was!

When I measured Dora's finger for a ring that was to be made of Forget-me-nots, and when the jeweller,
25 to whom I took the measure, found me out, and laughed over his order-book, and charged me anything he liked for the pretty little toy, with its blue stones — so associated in my remembrance with Dora's hand, that yesterday, when I saw such another, by chance, on the
30 finger of my own daughter, there was a momentary stirring in my heart, like pain!

When I walked about, exalted with my secret, and full of my own interest, and felt the dignity of loving Dora, and of being beloved, so much, that if I had
35 walked the air, I could not have been more above the people not so situated, who were creeping on the earth!

When we had those meetings in the garden of the square, and sat within the dingy summer-house, so happy, that I love the London sparrows to this hour, for nothing

else, and see the plumage of the tropics in their smoky feathers!

When we had our first great quarrel (within a week of our betrothal), and when Dora sent me back the ring, enclosed in a despairing cocked-hat note, wherein she 5 used the terrible expression that "our love had begun in folly, and ended in madness!" which dreadful words occasioned me to tear my hair, and cry that all was over!

When, under cover of the night, I flew to Miss 10 Mills, whom I saw by stealth in a back-kitchen where there was a mangle, and implored Miss Mills to interpose between us and avert insanity. When Miss Mills undertook the office and returned with Dora, exhorting us, from the pulpit of her own bitter youth, to 15 mutual concession, and the avoidance of the desert of Sahara!

When we cried, and made it up, and were so blest again, that the back-kitchen, mangle and all, changed to Love's own temple, where we arranged a plan of 20 correspondence through Miss Mills, always to comprehend at least one letter on each side every day!

What an idle time! What an unsubstantial, happy, foolish time! Of all the times of mine that Time has in his grip, there is none that in one retrospect I can 25 smile at half so much, and think of half so tenderly.

2.

My new life had lasted for more than a week, and 30 I was stronger than ever in those tremendous practical resolutions that I felt the crisis required. I continued to walk extremely fast, and to have a general idea that I was getting on. I made it a rule to take as much out of myself as I possibly could, in my way of doing 35 everything to which I applied my energies. I made a perfect victim of myself. I even entertained some idea of putting myself on a vegetable diet, vaguely conceiving that, in becoming a graminivorous animal, I should sacrifice to Dora.

As yet, little Dora was quite unconscious of my desperate firmness, otherwise than as my letters darkly shadowed it forth. But, another Saturday came, and on that Saturday evening she was to be at Miss Mill's, and
5 when Mr. Mills had gone to his whist-club (telegraphed to me in the street, by a birdcage in the drawing-room middle window), I was to go there to tea.

I fatigued myself as much as I possibly could in the Commons all day, by a variety of devices, and at
10 the appointed time in the evening repaired to Mr. Mills's street. Mr. Mills had not yet gone out, and there was no birdcage in the middle window.

He kept me waiting so long that I fervently hoped the club would fine him for being late. At last he
15 came out, and then I saw my own Dora hang up the birdcage, and peep into the balcony to look for me, and run in again when she saw I was there, while her dog Jip remained behind, to bark injuriously at an immense butcher's dog in the street, who could have
20 taken him like a pill.

Dora came to the drawing-room door to meet me, and Jip came scrambling out, tumbling over his own growls, under the impression that I was a Bandit; and we all three went in, as happy and loving as could be.
25 I soon carried desolation into the bosom of our joys—not that I meant to do it, but that I was so full of the subject—by asking Dora, without the smallest preparation, if she could love a beggar?

My pretty, little, startled Dora! Her only association
30 with the word was a yellow face and a nightcap, or a pair of crutches, or a wooden leg, or a dog with a decanter-stand in his mouth, or something of that kind; and she stared at me with the most delightful wonder.

"How can you ask me anything so foolish?" pouted
35 Dora. "Love a beggar!"

"Dora, my own dearest!" said I. "*I am a beggar!*"

"How can you be such a silly thing," replied Dora, slapping my hand, "as to sit there, telling such stories! I'll make Jip bite you!"

Her childish way was the most delicious way in the world to me, but it was necessary to be explicit, and I solemnly repeated:

"Dora, my own life, I am your ruined David!"

"I declare I'll make Jip bite you!" said Dora, shaking her curls, "if you are so ridiculous!" 5

But I looked so serious that Dora left off shaking her curls, and laid her trembling little hand upon my shoulder, and first looked scared and anxious, then began to cry. That was dreadful. I fell upon my knees 10 before the sofa, caressing her, and imploring her not to rend my heart; but, for some time, poor little Dora did nothing but exclaim: Oh dear! Oh dear! And oh, she was so frightened! And where was Julia Mills! And oh, take her to Julia Mills, and go away, please! until I 15 was almost beside myself.

At last, after an agony of supplication and protestation, I got Dora to look at me, with a horrified expression of face, which I gradually soothed until it was only loving, and her soft, pretty cheek was lying 20 against mine. Then I told her, with my arms clasped round her, how I loved her, so dearly, and so dearly; how I felt it right to offer to release her from her engagement, because *now* I was poor; how I never could bear it, or recover it, if I lost her; how I had no fears 25 of poverty, if she had none, my arm being nerved and my heart inspired by her; how I was already working with a courage such as none but lovers knew; how I had begun to be practical, and look into the future; how a crust well-earned was sweeter far than a feast 30 inherited; and much more to the same purpose, which I delivered in a burst of passionate eloquence quite surprising to myself, though I had been thinking about it, day and night.

"Is your heart mine still, dear Dora?" said I rapturously, for I knew by her clinging to me that it was. 35

"Oh, yes!" cried Dora. "Oh, yes, it's all yours. Oh, don't be dreadful!"

I dreadful? To Dora!

"Don't talk about being poor, and working hard!" said Dora, nestling closer to me. "Oh, don't, don't!"

"My dearest love," said I, the crust well-earned—"

"Oh, yes; but I don't want to hear any more about
5 crusts!" said Dora. "And Jip must have a mutton-chop every day at twelve, or he'll die!"

I was charmed with her childish, winning way. I fondly explained to Dora that Jip should have his mutton-chop with his accustomed regularity. I drew a
10 picture of our home, made independent by my labour—sketching-in the little house I had seen at Highgate, and my aunt in her room up-stairs.

"I am not dreadful now, Dora?" said I, tenderly.

"Oh, no, no!" cried Dora. "But I hope your aunt
15 will keep in her own room a good deal! And I hope she's not a scolding old thing!"

If it were possible for me to love Dora more than ever, I am sure I did. But I felt she was a little impracticable. It damped my new-born ardour, to find
20 that ardour so difficult of communication to her. I made another trial. When she was quite herself again and was curling Jip's ears, as he lay upon her lap, I became grave, and said:

"My own! May I mention something?"

25 "Oh, please don't be practical," said Dora coaxingly, "because it frightens me so!"

"Sweet heart!" I returned; "there is nothing to alarm you in all this. I want you to think of it quite differently. I want to make it nerve you, and inspire
30 you, Dora!"

"Oh, but that's so shocking!" cried Dora.

"My love, no. Perseverance and strength of character will enable us to bear much worse things."

"But I haven't got any strength at all," said Dora,
35 shaking her curls. "Have I, Jip? Oh, do kiss Jip, and be agreeable!"

It was impossible to resist kissing Jip, when she held him up to me for that purpose, putting her own bright, rosy little mouth into kissing form, as she directed
40 the operation, which she insisted should be performed

symmetrically, on the centre of his nose. I did as she bade me and she charmed me out of my graver character for I don't know how long.

"But, Dora, my beloved!" said I, at last resuming it; "I was going to mention something." 5

The Judge of the Prerogative Court might have fallen in love with her, to see her fold her little hands and hold them up, begging and praying me not to be dreadful any more.

"Indeed I am not going to be, my darling!" I assured her. "But, Dora, my love, if you will sometimes think—not despondingly, you know; far from that!—but if you will sometimes think—just to encourage yourself—that you are engaged to a poor man—" 10

"Don't, don't! Pray don't!" cried Dora. "It's so very dreadful!" 15

"My soul, not at all!" said I cheerfully. "If you will sometimes think of that, and look about now and then at your papa's housekeeping, and endeavour to acquire a little habit—of accounts, for instance—" 20

Poor little Dora received this suggestion with something that was half a sob and half a scream.

"—It would be so useful to us afterwards," I went on. "And if you would promise me to read a little—a little Cookery Book that I would send you, it would be so excellent for both of us. For our path in life, my Dora," said I, warming with the subject, "is stony and rugged now, and it rests with us to smooth it. We must fight our way onward. We must be brave. There are obstacles to be met, and we must meet and crush them!" 25 30

I was going on at a great rate, with a clenched hand, and a most enthusiastic countenance; but it was quite unnecessary to proceed. I had said enough. I had done it again. Oh, she was so frightened! Oh, where was Julia Mills? Oh, take her to Julia Mills, and go away, please! So that, in short, I was quite distracted, and raved about the drawing-room. 35

I thought I had killed her, this time. I sprinkled water on her face. I went down on my knees. I plucked 40

at my hair. I denounced myself as a remorseless brute and a ruthless beast. I implored her forgiveness. I besought her to look up. I ravaged Miss Mills's work-box for a smelling-bottle, and in my agony of mind
5 applied an ivory needle-case instead, and dropped all the needles over Dora. I shook my fists at Jip, who was as frantic as myself. I did every wild extravagance that could be done, and was a long way beyond the end of wits when Miss Mills came into the room.

10 "Who has done this!" exclaimed Miss Mills, succouring her friend.

I replied: "*I*, Miss Mills! *I* have done it! Behold the destroyer!"—or words to that effect—and hid my face from the light, in the sofa cushion.

15 At first Miss Mills thought it was a quarrel, and that we were verging on the Desert of Sahara; but she soon found out how matters stood, for my dear affectionate little Dora, embracing her, began exclaiming that I was "a poor labourer;" and then cried for me, and
20 asked me would I let her give me all her money to keep, and then fell on Miss Mills's neck, sobbing as if her tender heart were broken.

Miss Mills must have been born to be a blessing to us. She ascertained from me in a few words what it was
25 all about, comforted Dora, and gradually convinced her that I was not a labourer—from my manner of stating the case I believe Dora concluded that I was a navigator, and went balancing myself up and down a plank all day with a wheelbarrow—and so brought us together
30 in peace. When we were quite composed, and Dora had gone up-stairs to put some rose-water to her eyes, Miss Mills rang for tea. In the ensuing interval, I told Miss Mills that she was evermore my friend, and that my heart must cease to vibrate ere I could forget her
35 sympathy.

I then expounded to Miss Mills what I had endeavoured, so very unsuccessfully, to expound to Dora. Miss Mills replied, on general principles, that the Cottage of content was better than the Palace of cold splendour,
40 and that where love was, all was.

I said to Miss Mills that this was very true, and who should know it better than I, who loved Dora with a love that never mortal had experienced yet? But on Miss Mills observing, with despondency, that it were well indeed for some hearts if this were so, I explained 5 that I begged leave to restrict the observation to mortals of the masculine gender.

I then put it to Miss Mills, to say whether she considered that there was or was not any practical merit in the suggestion I had been anxious to make, concerning the accounts, the housekeeping, and the Cookery 10 Book?

Miss Mills, after some consideration, thus replied:

"Mr. Copperfield, I will be plain with you. Mental suffering and trial supply, in some natures, the place 15 of years, and I will be as plain with you as if I were a Lady Abbess. No. The suggestion is not appropriate to our Dora. Our dearest Dora is a favourite child of nature. She is a thing of light, and airiness, and joy. I am free to confess that if it could be done, it might 20 be well, but—" And Miss Mills shook her head.

I was encouraged by this closing admission on the part of Miss Mills to ask her whether, for Dora's sake, if she had any opportunity of luring her attention to such preparations for an earnest life, she would avail 25 herself of it? Miss Mills replied in the affirmative so readily, that I further asked her if she would take charge of the Cookery Book; and, if she ever could insinuate it upon Dora's acceptance, without frightening her, undertake to do me that crowning service. Miss Mills 30 accepted this trust, too, but was not sanguine.

And Dora returned, looking such a lovely little creature, that I really doubted whether she ought to be troubled with anything so ordinary. And she loved me so much, and was so captivating (particularly when 35 she made Jip stand on his hind legs for toast, and when she pretended to hold that nose of his against the hot tea-pot for punishment because he wouldn't), that I felt like a sort of Monster who had got into a

Fairy's bower, when I thought of having frightened her, and made her cry.

After tea we had the guitar; and Dora sang those same dear old French songs about the impossibility of
5 ever on any account leaving off dancing, La ra la, La ra la, until I felt a much greater Monster than before.

We had only one check to our pleasure, and that happened a little while before I took my leave, when, Miss Mills chancing to make some allusion to to-morrow
10 morning, I unluckily let out that, being obliged to exert myself now, I got up at five o'clock. Whether Dora had any idea that I was a Private Watchman, I am unable to say; but it made a great impression on her, and she neither played nor sang any more.

15 It was still on her mind when I bade her adieu, and she said to me, in her pretty coaxing way—as if I were a doll, I used to think—

“Now don't get up at five o'clock, you naughty boy. It's so nonsensical!”

20 “My love,” said I, “I have work to do.”

“But don't do it!” returned Dora. “Why should you?”

It was impossible to say to that sweet little surprised face, otherwise than lightly and playfully, that
25 we must work, to live.

“Oh! How ridiculous!” cried Dora.

“How shall we live without, Dora?” said I.

“How? Any how!” said Dora.

She seemed to think she had quite settled the
30 question, and I would hardly have put her out of conceit with her answer, for a fortune.

Well! I loved her, and I went on loving her, most absorbingly, entirely, and completely. But going on, too, working pretty hard, and busily keeping red-hot
35 all the irons I now had in the fire, I would sit sometimes of a night, thinking how I had frightened Dora that time, and how I could best make my way with a guitar-case through the forest of difficulty, until I used to fancy that my head was turning quite grey.

3.

I had written to Agnes Wickfield as soon as Dora and I were engaged. I had written to her a long letter, in which I tried to make her comprehend how blest I was, and what a darling Dora was. I entreated Agnes not to regard this as a thoughtless passion which could ever 5 yield to any other, or had the least resemblance to the boyish fancies that we used to joke about. I had assured her that its profundity was quite unfathomable, and expressed my belief that nothing like it had ever been known. 10

Somehow, as I wrote to Agnes on a fine evening by my open window, and the remembrance of her clear calm eyes and gentle face came stealing over me, it shed such a peaceful influence upon the hurry and agitation in which I had been living lately, and of 15 which my very happiness partook in some degree, that it soothed me into tears. I remember that I sat resting my head upon my hand, when the letter was half done, cherishing a general fancy as if Agnes were one of the elements of my natural home. As if, in the retirement 20 of the house made almost sacred to me by her presence, Dora and I must be happier than anywhere. As if, in love, joy, sorrow, hope, or disappointment, in all emotions, my heart turned naturally there, and found its refuge and best friend. 25

4.

It was not on that evening; but, as I well remember, on the next evening but one, which was a Saturday, 30 that I took Agnes to see Dora.

I had arranged the visit, beforehand, with her aunts; and Agnes was expected to tea.

I was in a flutter of pride and anxiety; pride in my dear little betrothed, and anxiety that Agnes should 35 like her. All the way to Putney, Agnes being inside the stage-coach, and I outside, I pictured Dora to myself in every one of the pretty looks I knew so well; now making up my mind that I should like her to look

exactly as she looked at such a time, and then doubting whether I should not prefer her looking as she looked at such another time; and almost worrying myself into a fever about it.

5 I was troubled by no doubt of her being very pretty, in any case; but it fell out that I had never seen her look so well.

At first she wouldn't come at all; and then she pleaded for five minutes by my watch. When at length
10 she put her arm through mine, to be taken to the drawing-room, her charming little face was flushed, and had never been so pretty. But, when we went into the room, and it turned pale, she was ten thousand times prettier yet.

15 Dora was afraid of Agnes. She had told me that she knew Agnes was "too clever." But when she saw her looking at once so cheerful and so earnest, and so thoughtful, and so good, she gave a faint little cry of pleased surprise, and just put her affectionate arms round
20 Agnes's neck, and laid her innocent cheek against her face.

I never was so happy. I never was so pleased as when I saw those two sit down together, side by side. As when I saw my little darling looking up so naturally
25 to those cordial eyes. As when I saw the tender, beautiful regard which Agnes cast upon her.

The gentle cheerfulness of Agnes went to all our hearts. Her quiet interest in everything that interested Dora; her manner of making acquaintance with Jip
30 (who responded instantly), her modest grace and ease, eliciting a crowd of blushing little marks of confidence from Dora, seemed to make our circle quite complete.

"I am so glad," said Dora, after tea, "that you like me."

35 Agnes said, she was afraid I must have given her an unpromising character, but Dora corrected that directly.

"Oh no!" she said, shaking her curls at me; "it was all praise. He thinks so much of your opinion,
40 that I was quite afraid of it."

"My good opinion cannot strengthen his attachment to some people whom he knows," said Agnes, with a smile; "it is not worth their having."

"But please let me have it," said Dora, in her coaxing way, "if you can!" 5

We made merry about Dora's wanting to be liked, and Dora said I was a goose, and she didn't like me at any rate, and the short evening flew away on gossamer-wings. The time was at hand when the coach was to call for us. I was standing alone before the fire, when Dora came stealing softly in, to take leave of me. 10

"Don't you think, if I had had her for a friend a long time ago, Doady," said Dora, her bright eyes shining very brightly, and her little right hand idly busying itself with one of the buttons of my coat, "I might have been more clever perhaps?" 15

"My love!" said I, "what nonsense!"

"Do you think it is nonsense?" returned Dora, without looking at me. "Are you sure it is?" 20

"Of course I am!"

"I have forgotten," said Dora, still turning the button round and round, "what relation Agnes is to you, you dear bad boy."

"No blood-relation," I replied; "but we were brought up together, like brother and sister." 25

"I wonder why you ever fell in love with me?" said Dora, beginning on another button of my coat.

"Perhaps because I couldn't see you, and not love you, Dora!" 30

"Suppose you had never seen me at all," said Dora, going to another button.

"Suppose we had never been born!" said I, gaily.

I wondered what she was thinking about, as I glanced in admiring silence at the little soft hand travelling up the row of buttons on my coat, and at the clustering hair that lay against my breast, and at the lashes of her downcast eyes, slightly rising as they followed her idle fingers. 35

They all came back together within five minutes afterwards, and Dora's unusual thoughtfulness was quite gone then. She was laughingly resolved to put Jip through the whole of his performances, before the coach
5 came. They took some time (not so much on account of their variety, as Jip's reluctance), and were still unfinished when it was heard at the door.

There was an affectionate parting between Agnes and herself; and Dora was to write to Agnes (who was not
10 to mind her letters being foolish, she said), and Agnes was to write to Dora; and they had a second parting at the coach-door, and a third when Dora would come running out once more to remind Agnes at the coach-window about writing, and to shake her curls at me on
15 the box.

The stage-coach was to put us down near Covent Garden, where we were to take another stage-coach for Highgate. I was impatient for the short walk in the interval, that Agnes might praise Dora to me. Ah!
20 what praise it was! How lovingly and fervently did it commend the pretty creature I had won, with all her artless graces best displayed, to my most gentle care! How thoughtfully remind me, yet with no pretence of doing so, of the trust in which I held the child!

25 Never, never, had I loved Dora so deeply and truly, as I loved her that night. When we had again alighted, and were walking in the starlight along the quiet road that led to the Doctor's house, I told Agnes it was her doing,

"When you were sitting by her," said I, "you
30 seemed to be no less *her* guardian angel than mine; and you seem so now, Agnes."

"A poor angel," she returned, "but faithful."

LITTLE BLOSSOM.

1.

Weeks, months, seasons pass along. I have come legally to man's estate. I have attained the dignity of
35 twenty-one.

I have tamed that savage stenographic mystery. I make a respectable income by it. I am in high repute for my accomplishment in all pertaining to the art, and am joined with eleven others in reporting the debates in Parliament for a morning newspaper. 5

I have come out in another way. I have taken with fear and trembling to authorship. I wrote a little something in secret, and sent it to a magazine, and it was published in the magazine. Since then I have taken heart to write a good many trifling pieces. Now 10 I am regularly paid for them.

We have removed from Buckingham Street to a pleasant little cottage. My aunt, however (who has sold the house at Dover to good advantage), is not going to remain here, but intends removing herself to a still 15 more tiny cottage close at hand. What does this portend? My marriage? Yes!

Yes! I am going to be married to Dora! The realisation of my boyish day-dreams is at hand. I am going to take out the licence. 20

Our aunts roam all over London to find out articles of furniture for Dora and me to look at. It would be better for them to buy the goods at once without this ceremony of inspection: for, when we go to see a kitchen fender and meat-screen, Dora sees a Chinese 25 house for Jip, with little bells on the top, and prefers that.

Peggotty, my old nurse, comes up to make herself useful, and falls to work immediately. And now it is that I begin to see her solitary brother passing through the 30 dark streets at night, and looking, as he goes, among the wandering faces.

I have brought Agnes from the Canterbury coach, and her cheerful and beautiful face is among us for the second time. 35

The rest is all a more or less incoherent dream:

A dream of the clergyman and clerk appearing; of the service beginning in a deep voice, and our all being very attentive.

A dream of our kneeling down together, side by side; of Dora's trembling less and less, but always clasping Agnes by the hand; of the service being got through, quietly and gravely; of our all looking at each other in an April state of smiles and tears when it is over; of my young wife being hysterical in the vestry, and crying for her poor papa, her dear papa.

Of their whispering, as we pass, what a youthful couple we are, and what a pretty little wife she is.

10 Of her waving her little hand, and our going away once more. Of her once more stopping, and looking back, and hurrying to Agnes, and giving Agnes, above all the others, her last kisses and farewells.

We drive away together, and I awake from the 15 dream. I believe it at last. It is my dear, dear little wife beside me, whom I love so well!

"Are you happy now, you foolish boy," says Dora, "and sure you don't repent?"

2.

It was a strange condition of things, the honeymoon being over, and the bridesmaids gone home, when I found myself sitting down in my own small 25 house with Dora, quite thrown out of employment, as I may say, in respect of the delicious old occupation of making love.

It seemed such an extraordinary thing to have Dora always there. It was so unaccountable not to be obliged 30 to go out to see her, not to have any occasion to be tormenting myself about her, not to have to write to her, not to be scheming and devising opportunities of being alone with her. Sometimes, of an evening, when I looked up from my writing, and saw her seated 35 opposite, I would lean back in my chair, and think how queer it was that there we were, alone together as a matter of course—nobody's business any more—all the romance of our engagement put away upon a shelf, to rust—no one to please but one another—one another to 40 please, for life.

When there was a debate, and I was kept out very late, it seemed so strange to me, as I was walking home, to think that Dora was at home! It was such a wonderful thing, at first, to have her coming softly down to talk to me as I ate my supper. It was such 5 a stupendous thing to know for certain that she put her hair in papers. It was altogether such an astonishing event to see her do it!

I doubt whether two young birds could have known less about keeping house, than I and my pretty Dora 10 did. We had a servant, of course. She kept house for us. I have still a latent belief that she must have been my old landlady's daughter in disguise, we had such an awful time of it with Mary Anne.

Her name was Paragon. Her nature was represented 15 to us, when we engaged her, as being feebly expressed in her name. She had a written character, as large as a proclamation; and, according to this document, could do everything of a domestic nature that ever I heard of, and a great many things that I never did hear of. 20 She was a woman in the prime of life, of a severe countenance, and subject (particularly in the arms) to a sort of perpetual measles or fiery rash. She had a cousin in the Life Guards, with such long legs that he looked like the afternoon shadow of somebody else. His 25 shell-jacket was as much too little for him as he was too big for the premises. He made the cottage smaller than it need have been, by being so very much out of proportion to it. Besides which, the walls were not thick, and whenever he passed the evening at our house, we always 30 knew of it by hearing one continual growl in the kitchen.

Our treasure was warranted sober and honest. I am therefore willing to believe that she was in a fit when we found her under the boiler, and that the deficient tea-spoons were attributable to the dustman. 35

But she preyed upon our minds dreadfully. We felt our inexperience, and were unable to help ourselves. We should have been at her mercy, if she had had any; but she was a remorseless woman, and had none. She was the cause of our first little quarrel. 40

"My dearest life," I said one day to Dora, "do you think Mary Anne has any idea of time?"

"Why, Doady?" inquired Dora, looking up, innocently, from her drawing.

5 "My love, because it's five, and we were to have dined at four."

Dora glanced wistfully at the clock, and hinted that she thought it was too fast.

"On the contrary, my love," said I, referring to my
10 watch, "it's a few minutes too slow."

My little wife came and sat upon my knee, to coax me to be quiet, and drew a line with her pencil down the middle of my nose; but I couldn't dine off that, though it was very agreeable.

15 "Don't you think, my dear," said I, "it would be better for you to remonstrate with Mary Anne?"

"Oh no, please! I couldn't, Doady!" said Dora.

"Why not, my love?" I gently asked.

"Oh, because I am such a little goose," said Dora,
20 "and she knows I am!"

I thought this sentiment so incompatible with the establishment of any system of check on Mary Anne, that I frowned a little.

"Oh, what ugly wrinkles in my bad boy's forehead!"
25 said Dora, and still being on my knee, she traced them with her pencil; putting it to her rosy lips to make it mark blacker, and working at my forehead with a quaint little mockery of being industrious, that quite delighted me in spite of myself.

30 "There's a good child," said Dora, "it makes its face so much prettier to laugh."

"But, my love," said I.

"No, no! please!" cried Dora, with a kiss, "don't be a naughty Blue Beard! Don't be serious!"

35 "My precious wife," said I, "we must be serious sometimes. Come! Sit down on this chair, close beside me! Give me the pencil! There! Now let us talk sensibly. You know, dear;" what a little hand it was to hold, and what a tiny wedding-ring it was to see! "You

know, my love, it is not exactly comfortable to have to go out without one's dinner. Now, is it?"

"N—n—no!" replied Dora, faintly.

"My love, how you tremble!"

"Because I know you're going to scold me," exclaimed Dora, in a piteous voice. 5

"My sweet, I am only going to reason."

"Oh, but reasoning is worse than scolding!" exclaimed Dora, in despair. "I didn't marry to be reasoned with. If you meant to reason with such a poor 10 little thing as I am, you ought to have told me so, you cruel boy!"

I tried to pacify Dora, but she turned away her face, and shook her curls from side to side, and said: "You cruel, cruel boy!" so many times, that I really 15 did not exactly know what to do: so I took a few turns up and down the room in my uncertainty, and came back again.

"Dora, my darling!"

"No, I am not your darling. Because you *must* be 20 sorry that you married me, or else you wouldn't reason with me!" returned Dora.

I felt so injured by the inconsequential nature of this charge, that it gave me courage to be grave.

"Now, my own Dora," said I, "you are very child- 25 ish, and are talking nonsense. You must remember, I am sure, that I was obliged to go out yesterday when dinner was half over; and that, the day before, I was made quite unwell by being obliged to eat underdone veal in a hurry; to-day, I don't dine at all—and I am 30 afraid to say how long we waited for breakfast—and *then* the water didn't boil. I don't mean to reproach you, my dear, but this is not comfortable."

"Oh, you cruel, cruel boy, to say I am a disagree- 35 able wife!" cried Dora.

"Now, my dear Dora, you must know that I never said that!"

"You said I wasn't comfortable!" said Dora.

"I said the housekeeping was not comfortable."

"It's exactly the same thing!" cried Dora. And she evidently thought so, for she wept most grievously.

I took another turn across the room, full of love for my pretty wife, and distracted by self-accusatory
5 inclinations to knock my head against the door. I sat down again, and said:

"I am not blaming you, Dora. We have both a great deal to learn. I am only trying to show you, my dear, that you must—you really must" (I was resolved
10 not to give this up) "accustom yourself to look after Mary Anne. Likewise to act a little for yourself, and me."

"I wonder, I do, at your making such ungrateful speeches," sobbed Dora. "When you know that the
15 other day, when you said you would like a little bit of fish, I went out myself, miles and miles, and ordered it, to surprise you."

"And it was very kind of you, my own darling," said I. "I felt it so much that I wouldn't on any ac-
20 count have even mentioned that you bought a salmon, which was too much for two. Or that it cost one pound six—which was more than we can afford."

"You enjoyed it very much," sobbed Dora. "And you said I was a mouse."

25 "And I'll say so again, my love," I returned, "a thousand times!"

But I had wounded Dora's soft little heart, and she was not to be comforted. She was so pathetic in her sobbing and bewailing, that I felt as if I had said I
30 don't know what to hurt her. I was obliged to hurry away; I was kept out late; and I felt all night such pangs of remorse as made me miserable. I had the conscience of an assassin, and was haunted by a vague sense of enormous wickedness.

35 It was two or three hours past midnight when I got home. I found my aunt, in our house, sitting up for me.

"Is anything the matter, aunt?" said I, alarmed.

"Nothing, Trot," she replied. "Sit down, sit down. Little Blossom has been rather out of spirits, and I have
40 been keeping her company. That's all."

I leaned my head upon my hand, and felt more sorry and downcast, as I sat looking at the fire, than I could have supposed possible so soon after the fulfilment of my brightest hopes. As I sat thinking, I happened to meet my aunt's eyes, which were resting on my face. 5 There was an anxious expression in them, but it cleared directly.

"I assure you, aunt," said I, "I have been quite unhappy myself all night, to think of Dora's being so. But I had no other intention than to speak to her 10 tenderly and lovingly about our home-affairs."

My aunt nodded encouragement.

"You must have patience, Trot," said she.

"Of course. Heaven knows I don't mean to be unreasonable, aunt." 15

"No, no," said my aunt. "But Little Blossom is a very tender little blossom, and the wind must be gentle with her."

I thanked my good aunt, in my heart, for her tenderness towards my wife, and I was sure that she 20 knew I did.

"Don't you think, aunt," said I, after some further contemplation of the fire, "that you could advise and counsel Dora a little, for our mutual advantage, now and then?" 25

"Trot," returned my aunt, with some emotion, "no! Don't ask me such a thing."

Her tone was so very earnest that I raised my eyes in surprise.

"I look back on my life, child," said my aunt, 30 and I think of some who are in their graves, with whom I might have been on kinder terms. If I judged harshly of other people's mistakes in marriage, it may have been because I had bitter reason to judge harshly of my own. Let that pass. I have been a grumpy, frumpy, wayward 35 sort of a woman, a good many years. I am still, and I always shall be. But you and I have done one another some good, Trot,—at all events, you have done me good, my dear; and division must not come between us, at this time of day. 40

"Division between *us!*" cried I.

"Child, child!" said my aunt, smoothing her dress, "how soon it might come between us, or how unhappy I might make our Little Blossom, if I meddled in any-
5 thing, a prophet couldn't say. I want our pet to like me, and be as gay as a butterfly. Remember your own home, in that second marriage, and never do both me and her the injury you have hinted at!"

I comprehended, at once, that my aunt was right,
10 and I comprehended the full extent of her generous feeling towards my dear wife.

"These are early days, Trot," she pursued, "and Rome was not built in a day, nor in a year. You have chosen freely for yourself;" a cloud passed over her
15 face for a moment, I thought; "and you have chosen a very pretty and a very affectionate creature. It will be your duty, and it will be your pleasure too—of course I know that; I am not delivering a lecture—to estimate her (as you chose her) by the qualities she has,
20 and not by the qualities she may not have. The latter you must develop in her, if you can. And if you cannot, child," here my aunt rubbed her nose, "you must just accustom yourself to do without 'em. But remember, my dear, your future is between you two. No one can
25 assist you; you are to work it out for yourselves. This is marriage, Trot; and Heaven bless you both in it, for a pair of babes in the wood as you are!"

My aunt said this in a sprightly way, and gave me a kiss to ratify the blessing.

30 "Now," said she, "light my little lantern, and see me into my bandbox by the garden path;" for there was a communication between our cottages in that direction. "Give Betsey Trotwood's love to Blossom, when you come back; and whatever you do, Trot, never dream of
35 setting Betsey up as a scarecrow, for if *I* ever saw her in the glass, she's quite grim enough and gaunt enough in her private capacity!"

With this my aunt tied her head up in a handkerchief, with which she was accustomed to make a bundle
40 of it on such occasions; and I escorted her home. As

she stood in her garden, holding up her little lantern to light me back, I thought her observation of me had an anxious air again; but I was too much occupied in pondering on what she had said, and too much impressed—for the first time, in reality—by the conviction 5 that Dora and I had indeed to work out our future for ourselves, and that no one could assist us, to take much notice of it.

Dora came stealing down in her little slippers, to meet me, now that I was alone; and cried upon my 10 shoulder; and said I had been hard-hearted and she had been naughty; and I said much the same thing in effect, I believe; and we made it up, and agreed that our first little difference was to be our last, and that we were never to have another if we lived a hundred 15 years.

The next domestic trial we went through, was the Ordeal of Servants. Mary Anne's cousin deserted into our coal-hole, and was brought out, to our great amazement, by a piquet of his companions in arms, who 20 took him away handcuffed in a procession that covered our front-garden with ignominy. This nerved me to get rid of Mary Anne, who went so mildly, on receipt of wages, that I was surprised, until I found out about the teas-poons, and also about the little sums she had borrow- 25 ed in my name of the tradespeople without authority. After an interval of Mrs. Kidgerbury—the oldest inhabitant of Kentish Town, I believe, who went out charing, but was too feeble to execute her conceptions of that art—we found another treasure, who was one of 30 the most amiable of women, but who generally made a point of falling either up or down the kitchen stairs with the tray, and almost plunged into the parlour, as into a bath, with the tea-things. The ravages committed by this unfortunate rendering her dismissal necessary, 35 she was succeeded (with intervals of Mrs. Kidgerbury) by a long line of Incapables, terminating in a young person of genteel appearance, who went to Greenwich Fair in Dora's bonnet. After whom I remember nothing but an average equality of failure.

Everybody we had anything to do with seemed to cheat us. Our appearance in a shop was a signal for the damaged goods to be brought out immediately. If we bought a lobster, it was full of water. All our meat
5 turned out to be tough, and there was hardly any crust to our loaves. In search of the principle on which joints ought to be roasted, to be roasted enough, and not too much, I myself referred to the Cookery Book, and found it there established as the allowance of a quarter of an
10 hour to every pound, and say a quarter over. But the principle always failed us by some curious fatality, and we never could hit any medium between redness and cinders.

I had reason to believe that in accomplishing these
15 failures we incurred a far greater expense than if we had achieved a series of triumphs. It appeared to me, on looking over the tradesmen's books, as if we might have kept the basement story paved with butter, such was the extensive scale of our consumption of that article.
20 I don't know whether the Excise returns of the period may have exhibited any increase in the demand for pepper; but if our performances did not affect the market, I should say several families must have left off using it. And the most wonderful fact of all was that we never
25 had anything in the house.

One of our first feats in the housekeeping way was a little dinner to Traddles, my old friend and school-fellow. I met him in town, and asked him to walk out with me that afternoon. He readily consenting, I
30 wrote to Dora, saying I would bring him home. It was pleasant weather, and on the road we made my domestic happiness the theme of conversation. Traddles was very full of it; and said that, picturing himself with such a home, and a wife waiting and preparing for him, he
35 could think of nothing wanting to complete his bliss.

I could not have wished for a prettier little wife at the opposite end of the table, but I certainly could have wished, when we sate down, for a little more room. I did not know how it was, but though there were only
40 two of us, we were at once always cramped for room,

and yet had always room enough to lose everything in. I suspect it may have been because nothing had a place of its own, except Jip's pagoda, which invariably blocked up the main thoroughfare. On the present occasion, Traddles was so hemmed in by the pagoda and the 5 guitar-case, and Dora's flower-painting, and my writing-table, that I had serious doubts of the possibility of his using his knife and fork; but he protested, with his own good-humour, "Oceans of room, Copperfield! I assure you, Oceans!" 10

There was another thing I could have wished, namely, that Jip had never been encouraged to walk about the table-cloth during dinner. I began to think there was something disorderly in his being there at all, even if he had not been in the habit of putting his foot in the 15 salt or the melted butter. On this occasion he seemed to think he was introduced expressly to keep Traddles at bay; and he barked at my old friend, and made short runs at his plate, with such undaunted pertinacity, that he may be said to have engrossed the conversation. 20

However, as I knew how tender-hearted my dear Dora was, and how sensitive she would be to any slight upon her favourite, I hinted no objection. For similar reasons I made no allusion to the skirmishing plates upon the floor; or to the disreputable appearance of the 25 castors, which were all at sixes and sevens, and looked drunk; or to the further blockade of Traddles by wandering vegetable dishes and jugs. I could not help wondering in my own mind, as I contemplated the boiled leg of mutton before me, previous to carving it, how it came 30 to pass that our joints of meat were of such extraordinary shapes—and whether our butcher contracted for all the deformed sheep that came into the world; but I kept my reflections to myself.

"My love," said I to Dora, "what have you got in 35 that dish?"

I could not imagine why Dora had been making tempting little faces at me, as if she wanted to kiss me.

"Oysters, dear," said Dora, timidly.

"Was that *your* thought?" said I, delighted. 40

"Ye-yes, Doady," said Dora.

"There never was a happier one!" I exclaimed, laying down the carving-knife and fork. "There is nothing Traddles likes so much!"

5 "Ye-yes, Doady," said Dora, "and so I bought a beautiful little barrel of them, and the man said they were very good. But I—I am afraid there's something the matter with them. They don't seem right." Here Dora shook her head, and diamonds twinkled in her eyes.

10 "They are only opened in both shells," said I. "Take the top one off, my love."

"But it won't come off," said Dora, trying very hard, and looking very much distressed.

"Do you know, Copperfield," said Traddles, cheer-
15 fully examining the dish, "I think it is in consequence—they are capital oysters, but I *think* it is in consequence—of their never having been opened."

They never had been opened; and we had no oyster-knives—and couldn't have used them if we had;
20 so we looked at the oysters and ate the mutton. At least we ate as much of it as was done, and made up with capers. If I had permitted him, I am satisfied that Traddles would have made a perfect savage of himself, and eaten a plateful of raw meat, to express en-
25 joyment of the repast; but I would hear of no such immolation on the altar of friendship, and we had a course of bacon instead, there happening, by good fortune, to be cold bacon in the larder.

My poor little wife was in such affliction when she
30 thought I should be annoyed, and in such a state of joy when she found I was not, that the discomfiture I had subdued very soon vanished, and we passed a happy evening, Dora sitting with her arm on my chair while Traddles and I discussed a glass of wine, and taking
35 every opportunity of whispering in my ear that it was so good of me not to be a cruel, cross old boy. By and by she made tea for us; which it was so pretty to see her do, as if she was busying herself with a set of doll's tea-things, that I was not particular about the
40 quality of the beverage. Then Traddles and I played

a game or two at cribbage; and Dora singing to the guitar the while, it seemed to me as if our courtship and marriage were a tender dream of mine, and the night when I first listened to her voice were not yet over.

5

When Traddles went away, and I came back into the parlour from seeing him out, my wife planted her chair close to mine, and sat down by my side.

"I am very sorry," she said. "Will you try to teach me, Doady?"

10

"I must teach myself first, Dora," said I. "I am as bad as you, love."

"Ah! But you can learn," she returned; "and you are a clever, clever man!"

"Nonsense, mouse!" said I.

15

"I wish," resumed my wife, after a long silence, "that I could have gone down into the country for a whole year, and lived with Agnes!"

Her hands were clasped upon my shoulder, and her chin rested on them, and her blue eyes looked quietly into mine.

"Why so?" I asked.

"I think she might have improved me, and I think I might have learned from *her*," said Dora.

"All in good time, my love. Agnes has had her father to take care of for these many years, you should remember. Even when she was quite a child, she was the Agnes whom we know," said I.

"Will you call me a name I want you to call me?" inquired Dora, without moving.

30

"What is it?" I asked with a smile.

"It's a stupid name," she said, shaking her curls for a moment. "Child-wife."

I laughingly asked my child-wife what her fancy was in desiring to be so called. She answered without moving, otherwise than as the arm I twined about her may have brought her blue eyes nearer to me:

35

"I don't mean, you silly fellow, that you should use the name instead of Dora. I only mean that you should think of me that way. When you are going to

40

be angry with me, say to yourself: 'It's only my child-wife!' When I am very disappointing, say: 'I knew, a long time ago, that she would make but a child-wife!' When you miss what I should like to be, and I think
5 can never be, say: 'Still my foolish child-wife loves me!' For indeed I do."

I had not been serious with her; having no idea, until now, that she was serious herself. But her affectionate nature was so happy in what I now said to her
10 with my whole heart, that her face became a laughing one before her glittering eyes were dry. She was soon my child-wife indeed, sitting down on the floor outside the Chinese House, ringing all the little bells one after another, to punish Jip for his recent bad behaviour,
15 while Jip lay blinking in the doorway with his head out, even too lazy to be teased.

This appeal of Dora's made a strong impression on me. I look back on the time I write of, I invoke the innocent figure that I dearly loved, to come out from
20 the mists and shadows of the past, and turn its gentle head towards me once again; and I can still declare that this one little speech was constantly in my memory. I may not have used it to the best account; I was young and inexperienced; but I never turned a deaf
25 ear to its artless pleading.

Dora told me, shortly afterwards, that she was going to be a wonderful housekeeper. Accordingly, she polished the tablets, pointed the pencil, bought an immense account-book, carefully stitched up with a needle
30 and thread all the leaves of the Cookery Book which Jip had torn, and made quite a desperate little attempt "to be good," as she called it. But the figures had the old obstinate propensity—they *would not* add up. When she had entered two or three laborious items in the
35 account-book, Jip would walk over the page, wagging his tail, and smear them all out. Her own little right-hand middle finger got steeped to the very bone in ink; and I think that was the only decided result attained.

Sometimes of an evening, when I was at home and at
40 work—for I wrote a good deal now, and was beginning in

a small way to be known as a writer—I would lay down my pen, and watch my child-wife trying to be good. First of all, she would bring out the immense account-book, and lay it down upon the table, with a deep sigh. Then she would open it at the place where Jip had made it illegible 5 last night, and call Jip up to look at his misdeeds. This would occasion a diversion in Jip's favour, and some inking of his nose, perhaps, as a penalty. Then she would tell Jip to lie down on the table instantly, "like a lion"—which was one of his tricks, though I cannot say the 10 likeness was striking—and, if he were in an obedient humour, he would obey. Then she would take up a pen, and begin to write, and find a hair in it. Then she would take up another pen, and begin to write, and find that it spluttered. Then she would take up another pen, and 15 begin to write, and say, in a low voice, "Oh, it's a talking pen, and will disturb Doady!" And then she would give it up as a bad job, and put the account-book away, after pretending to crush the lion with it.

"Oh, what a weary boy!" said Dora, one night, when 20 I met her eyes.

"What a weary girl!" said I. "That's more to the purpose. You must go to bed another time, my love. It's far too late for you."

"No, don't send me to bed!" pleaded Dora, coming to 25 my side. "Pray don't do that!" Please let me hold the pens, I want to have something to do with all those many hours when you are so industrious. May I hold the pens?

The remembrance of her pretty joy when I said Yes 30 brings tears into my eyes. The next time I sat down to write, and regularly afterwards, she sat in her old place, with a spare bundle of pens at her side. Her triumph in this connection with my work, and her delight when I wanted a new pen—which I very often 35 feigned to do—suggested to me a new way of pleasing my child-wife. I occasionally made a pretence of wanting a page or two of manuscript copied. Then Dora was in her glory. The preparations she made for this great work, the aprons she put on, the bibs she borrowed 40

from the kitchen to keep off the ink, the time she took, the innumerable stoppages she made to have a laugh with Jip, as if he understood it all, her conviction that her work was incomplete unless she signed her name
5 at the end, and the way in which she would bring it to me, like a school-copy, and then, when I praised it, clasp me round the neck, are touching recollections to me, simple as they might appear to other men.

So we went on. Dora was hardly less affectionate
10 to my aunt than to me. I never saw my aunt unbend more systematically to any one. She courted Jip, though Jip never responded; listened, day after day, to the guitar, though I am afraid she had no taste for music; went wonderful distances on foot to purchase, as sur-
15 prises, any trifles that she found out Dora wanted; and never came in by the garden, and missed her from the room, but she would call out, at the foot of the stairs, in a voice that sounded cheerfully all over the house:

“Where’s Little Blossom?”

FADING.

1.

I laboured hard at my book, without allowing it to interfere with the punctual discharge of my newspaper duties, and it came out, and was very successful.

I had been writing, in the newspaper and elsewhere,
30 so prosperously, that when my new success was achieved I considered myself reasonably entitled to escape from the dreary debates. One joyful night, therefore, I noted down the music of the Parliamentary bagpipes for the last time, and I have never heard it since.

35 It remained for me to adapt myself to Dora; to share with her what I could, and be happy; to bear on my own shoulders what I must, and be happy still. This was the discipline to which I tried to bring my heart, when I began to think. It made my second year

much happier than my first; and, what was better still, made Dora's life all sunshine.

But, as that year wore on, Dora was not strong. I had hoped that lighter hands than mine would help to mould her character, and might change my child-wife to a woman. 5
It was not to be.

"When I can run about again as I used to do, aunt," said Dora, "I shall make Jip race. He is getting quite slow and lazy."

"I suspect, my dear," said my aunt, quietly work- 10
ing by her side, "he has a worse disorder than that. Age, Dora."

"Do you think he is old?" said Dora, astonished. "Oh, how strange it seems that Jip should be old!"

"It's a complaint we are all liable to, Little One, 15
as we get on in life," said my aunt, cheerfully; "I don't feel more free from it than I used to be, I assure you."

"But Jip," said Dora, looking at him with compassion, "even little Jip! Oh, poor fellow!"

Dora had helped him up on the sofa, where he 20
really was defying my aunt to such a furious extent that he couldn't keep straight, but barked himself sideways. The more my aunt looked at him, the more he reproached her; for she had lately taken to spectacles, and for some inscrutable reason he considered the glasses 25
personal.

Dora made him lie down by her, with a good deal of persuasion; and when he was quiet, drew one of his long ears through and through her hand, repeating thoughtfully, "Even little Jip! Oh, poor fellow!" 30

Jip nestled closer to his mistress, and lazily licked her hand.

"You are not so old, Jip, are you, that you'll leave your mistress yet?" said Dora. We may keep one another company a little longer!" 35

My pretty Dora! When she came down to dinner on the ensuing Sunday, and was so glad to see old Traddles (who always dined with us on Sunday), we thought she would be "running about as she used to

do" in a few days. But they said, wait a few days more; and then, wait a few days more; and still she neither ran nor walked. She looked very pretty, and was very merry; but the little feet that used to be so
5 nimble when they danced round Jip were dull and motionless.

I began to carry her down-stairs every morning, and up-stairs every night. She would clasp me round the neck, and laugh the while, as if I did it for a wager.
10 Jip would bark and caper round us, and go on before, and look back on the landing, breathing short, to see that we were coming. My aunt, the best and most cheerful of nurses, would trudge after us, a moving mass of shawls and pillows. We made quite a gay
15 procession of it, and my child-wife was the gayest there.

But sometimes when I took her up, and felt that she was lighter in my arms, a dead blank feeling came upon me, as if I were approaching to some frozen region, yet unseen, that numbed my life. I avoided the re-
20 cognition of this feeling by any name, or by any communing with myself; until one night, when it was very strong upon me, and my aunt had left her with a parting cry of "Good-night, Little Blossom," I sat down at my desk alone, and cried to think, Oh what a fatal
25 name it was, and how the blossom withered in its bloom upon the tree!

2.

30 I must pause yet once again. Oh, my child-wife, there is a figure in the moving crowd before my memory, quiet and still, saying in its innocent love and childish beauty: Stop to think of me—turn to look upon the Little Blossom, as it flutters to the ground!

35 I do. All else grows dim, and fades away. I am again with Dora, in our cottage. I do not know how long she has been ill. I am so used to it in feeling, that I cannot count the time. It is not really long, in weeks or months; but, in my usage and experience, it
40 is a weary, weary while.

They have left off telling me to "wait a few days more." I have begun to fear, remotely, that the day may never shine, when I shall see my child-wife running in the sunlight with her old friend Jip.

He is, as it were suddenly, grown very old. It ⁵ may be that he misses in his mistress something that enlivened him and made him younger; but he mopes, and his sight is weak, and his limbs are feeble, and my aunt is sorry that he objects to her no more, but creeps near her as he lies on Dora's bed—she sitting ¹⁰ at the bedside—and mildly licks her hand.

Dora lies smiling on us, and is beautiful, and utters no hasty or complaining word. She says that we are very good to her; that her dear old careful boy is tiring himself out, she knows; that my aunt has no ¹⁵ sleep, yet is always wakeful, active, and kind. Sometimes, her aunts come to see her; and then we talk about our wedding-day, and all that happy time.

What a strange rest and pause in my life there seems to be—and in all life, within doors and without ²⁰—when I sit in the quiet, shaded, orderly room, with the blue eyes of my child-wife turned towards me, and her little fingers twining round my hand! Many and many an hour I sit thus; but, of all those times, three times come the freshest on my mind. ²⁵

It is morning; and Dora, made so trim by my aunt's hands, shows me how her pretty hair *will* curl upon the pillow yet, and how long and bright it is, and how she likes to have it loosely gathered in that ³⁰ net she wears.

"Not that I am vain of it, now, you mocking boy," she says, when I smile; "but because you used to say you thought it so beautiful; and because, when I first began to think about you, I used to peep in the glass, ³⁵ and wonder whether you would like very much to have a lock of it. Oh, what a foolish fellow you were, Doady, when I gave you one!"

"That was on the day when you were painting the flowers I had given you, Dora, and when I told you how much in love I was."

"Ah! but I didn't like to tell *you*," says Dora,
5 "*then*, how I had cried over them, because I believed you really liked me! When I can run about again as I used to do, Doady, let us go and see those places where we were such a silly couple, shall we? And take some of the old walks? And not forget poor papa?"

10 "Yes, we will, and have some happy days. So you must make haste to get well, my dear."

"Oh, I shall soon do that! I am so much better, you don't know!"

15 It is evening; and I sit in the same chair, by the same bed, with the same face turned towards me. We have been silent, and there is a smile upon her face. I have ceased to carry my light burden up and down stairs now. She lies here all the day.

20 "Doady!"

"My dear Dora!"

"You won't think what I am going to say, unreasonable, after what you told me, such a little while ago, of Mr. Wickfield's not being well! I want to see Agnes.
25 Very much I want to see her."

"I will write to her, my dear."

"Will you?"

"Directly."

30 "What a good, kind boy! Doady, take me on your arm. Indeed, my dear, it's not a whim. It's not a foolish fancy. I want, very much indeed, to see her!"

"I am certain of it. I have only to tell her so, and she is sure to come."

35 "You are very lonely when you go down-stairs, now?" Dora whispers, with her arm about my neck.

"How can I be otherwise, my own love, when I see your empty chair?"

"My empty chair!" She clings to me for a little while, in silence. "And you really miss me, Doady?"

looking up, and brightly smiling. "Even poor, giddy, stupid me?"

"My heart, who is there upon earth that I could miss so much?"

"Oh, husband! I am so glad, yet so sorry!" creeping 5
closer to me, and folding me in both her arms. She laughs and sobs, and then is quiet, and quite happy.

"Quite!" she says. "Only give Agnes my dear love, and tell her that I want very, very much to see her; and I have nothing left to wish for." 10

"Except to get well again, Dora."

"Ah, Doady! Sometimes I think—you know I always was a silly little thing!—that that will never be!"

"Don't say so, Dora! Dearest love, don't think so!"

"I won't, if I can help it, Doady. But I am very 15
happy; though my dear boy is so lonely by himself, before his child-wife's empty chair!"

It is night; and I am with her still. Agnes has arrived, has been among us, for a whole day and an 20
evening. She, my aunt, and I, have sat with Dora since the morning, all together. We have not talked much, but Dora has been perfectly contented and cheerful. We are now alone.

Do I know, now, that my child-wife will soon leave 25
me? They have told me so; they have told me nothing new to my thoughts; but I am far from sure that I have taken that truth to heart. I cannot master it. I have withdrawn by myself, many times to-day, to weep. I have remembered Who wept for a parting between the 30
living and the dead. I have bethought me of all that gracious and compassionate history. I have tried to resign myself, and to console myself; and that, I hope I may have done imperfectly; but what I cannot firmly settle in my mind is, that the end will absolutely come. 35
I hold her hand in mine, I hold her heart in mine, I see her love for me, alive in all its strength. I cannot shut out a pale lingering shadow of belief that she will be spared.

"I am going to speak to you, Doady. I am going to say something I have often thought of saying, lately. You won't mind?" with a gentle look.

"Mind, my darling?"

5 "Because I don't know what you will think, or what you may have thought sometimes. Perhaps you have often thought the same. Doady, dear, I am afraid I was too young."

I lay my face upon the pillow by her, and she
10 looks into my eyes, and speaks very softly. Gradually, as she goes on, I feel, with a stricken heart, that she is speaking of herself as past.

"I am afraid, dear, I was too young. I don't mean in years only, but in experience, and thoughts, and
15 everything. I was such a silly little creature! I am afraid it would have been better, if we had only loved each other as a boy and girl, and forgotten it. I have begun to think I was not fit to be a wife."

I try to stay my tears, and to reply, "Oh, Dora,
20 love, as fit as I to be a husband!"

"I don't know," with the old shake of her curls. "Perhaps! But, if I had been more fit to be married, I might have made you more so too. Besides, you are very clever, and I never was."

25 "We have been very happy, my sweet Dora."

"I was very happy, very. But, as years went on, my dear boy would have been wearied of his child-wife. She would have been less and less a companion for him. He would have been more and more sensible of what
30 was wanting in his home. She wouldn't have improved. It is better as it is."

"Oh, Dora, dearest, dearest, do not speak to me so. Every word seems a reproach!"

"No, not a syllable!" she answers, kissing me.
35 "Oh, my dear, you never deserved it, and I loved you far too well, to say a reproachful word to you, in earnest—it was all the merit I had, except being pretty—or you thought me so. Is it lonely, down-stairs, Doady?"

"Very! Very!"

40 "Don't cry! Is my chair there?"

"In its old place."

"Oh, how my poor boy cries! Hush, hush! Now, make me one promise. I want to speak to Agnes. When you go down-stairs, tell Agnes so, and send her up to me; and while I speak to her, let no one come—not 5 even aunt. I want to speak to Agnes by herself. I want to speak to Agnes, quite alone."

I promise that she shall, immediately; but I cannot leave her, for my grief.

"I said that it was better as it is!" she whispers, 10 as she holds me in her arms. "Oh, Doady, after more years, you never could have loved your child-wife better than you do; and, after more years, she would so have tried and disappointed you, that you might not have been able to love her half so well! I know I was too 15 young and foolish. It is much better as it is!"

Agnes is down-stairs, when I go into the parlour; and I give her the message. She disappears, leaving me alone with Jip. 20

His Chinese house is by the fire; and he lies within it, on his bed of flannel, querulously trying to sleep. The bright moon is high and clear. As I look out on the night, my tears fall fast, and my undisciplined heart is chastened heavily—heavily. 25

I sit down by the fire, thinking with a blind remorse of all those secret feelings I have nourished since my marriage. I think of every little trifle between me and Dora, and feel the truth, that trifles make the sum of life. Ever rising from the sea of my remembrance, 30 is the image of the dear child as I knew her first, graced by my young love, and by her own, with every fascination wherein such love is rich. Would it, indeed, have been better if we had loved each other as a boy and girl, and forgotten it? Undisciplined heart, reply! 35

How the time wears, I know not; until I am recalled by my child-wife's old companion. More restless than he was, he crawls out of his house, and looks at me, and wanders to the door, and whines to go up-stairs. 40

"Not to-night, Jip! Not to night!"

He comes very slowly back to me, licks my hand, and lifts his dim eyes to my face.

"Oh, Jip! It may be, never again!"

5 He lies down at my feet, stretches himself out as if to sleep, and with a plaintive cry, is dead.

"Oh, Agnes! Look, look, here!"

—That face, so full of pity and of grief, that rain of tears, that awful mute appeal to me, that solemn hand
10 upraised towards Heaven!

"Agnes?"

It is over. Darkness comes before my eyes; and, for a time, all things are blotted out of my remembrance.

ABSENCE.

It was a long and gloomy night that gathered on me, haunted by the ghosts of many hopes, of many
20 dear remembrances, many errors, many unavailing sorrows and regrets.

I went away from England, not knowing, even then, how great the shock was, that I had to bear. I left all who were dear to me, and went away, and believed
25 that I had borne it, and it was past. As a man upon a field of battle will receive a mortal hurt, and scarcely know that he is struck, so I, when I was left alone with my undisciplined heart, had no conception of the wound with which it had to strive.

30 The knowledge came upon me, not quickly, but little by little, and grain by grain. The desolate feeling with which I went abroad, deepened and widened hourly. At first it was a heavy sense of loss and sorrow, wherein I could distinguish little else. By imperceptible degrees,
35 it became a hopeless consciousness of all that I had lost—love, friendship, interest; of all that had been shattered—my first trust, my first affection, the whole airy castle of my life; of all that remained—a ruined blank and waste, lying wide around me, unbroken, to the dark
40 horizon.

From the accumulated sadness into which I fell, I had at length no hope of ever issuing again. I roamed from place to place, carrying my burden with me everywhere. I felt its whole weight now; and I drooped beneath it, and I said in my heart that it could never 5 be lightened.

When this despondency was at its worst, I believed that I should die. Sometimes, I thought that I would like to die at home, and actually turned back on my road, that I might get there soon. At other times, I 10 passed on farther away, from city to city, seeking I know not what, and trying to leave I know not what behind.

It is not in my power to retrace, one by one, all the weary phases of distress of mind through which I 15 passed. There are some dreams that can only be imperfectly and vaguely described; and when I oblige myself to look back on this time of my life, I seem to be recalling such a dream. I see myself passing on among the novelties of foreign towns, palaces, cathedrals, temp- 20 les, pictures, castles, tombs, fantastic streets—the old abiding places of History and Fancy—as a dreamer might, bearing my painful load through all, and hardly conscious of the objects as they fade before me. Listlessness to everything but brooding sorrow, was the 25 night that fell on my undisciplined heart. Let me look up from it—as at last I did, thank Heaven!—and from its long, sad, wretched dream, to dawn.

For many months I travelled with this ever-darkening cloud upon my mind. Some blind reasons that I 30 had for not returning home—reasons then struggling within me, vainly, for more distinct expression—kept me on my pilgrimage. Sometimes, I had proceeded restlessly from place to place, stopping nowhere; sometimes, I had lingered long in one spot. I had had no purpose, 35 no sustaining soul within me, anywhere.

I was in Switzerland. I had come out of Italy, over one of the great passes of the Alps, and had since wandered with a guide among the bye-ways of the mountains. If those awful solitudes had spoken to my 40

heart, I did not know it. I had found sublimity and wonder in the dread heights and precipices, in the roaring torrents, and the wastes of ice and snow, but as yet they had taught me nothing else.

5 I came, one evening before sunset, down into a valley, where I was to rest. In the course of my descent to it, by the winding track along the mountain-side, from which I saw it shining far below, I think some long-unwonted sense of beauty and tranquillity, some
10 softening influence awakened by its peace, moved faintly in my breast. I remember pausing once, with a kind of sorrow that was not all oppressive, not quite despairing. I remember almost hoping that some better change was possible within me.

15 I came into the valley, as the evening sun was shining on the remote heights of snow, that closed it in, like eternal clouds. The bases of the mountains forming the gorge in which the little village lay, were richly green; and high above this gentler vegetation, grew
20 forests of dark fir, cleaving the wintry snow-drift, wedge-like, and stemming the avalanche. Above these, were range upon range of craggy steeps, grey rock, bright ice, and smooth verdure-specks of pasture, all gradually blending with the crowning snow. Dotted here and
25 there on the mountain's-side, each tiny dot a home, were lonely wooden cottages, so dwarfed by the towering heights that they appeared too small for toys. So did even the clustered village in the valley, with its wooden bridge across the stream, where the stream tumbled over
30 broken rocks, and roared away among the trees. In the quiet air, there was a sound of distant singing—shepherd voices—but, as one bright evening cloud floated midway along the mountain's-side I could almost have believed it came from there, and was not earthly music. All at
35 once, in this serenity, great Nature spoke to me, and soothed me to lay down my weary head upon the grass, and weep as I had not wept yet, since Dora died!

I had found a packet of letters awaiting me but a few minutes before, and had strolled out of the village
40 to read them while my supper was making ready. Other

packets had missed me, and I had received none for a long time. Beyond a line or two, to say that I was well, and had arrived at such a place, I had not had fortitude or constancy to write a letter since I left home.

The packet was in my hand. I opened it, and read 5 the writing of Agnes.

She was happy and useful, was prospering as she had hoped. That was all she told me of herself. The rest referred to me.

She gave me no advice; she urged no duty on me; 10 she only told me, in her own fervent manner, what her trust in me was. She knew (she said) how such a nature as mine would turn affliction to good. She knew how trial and emotion would exalt and strengthen it. She was sure that in my every purpose I should gain a 15 firmer and a higher tendency through the grief I had undergone. She, who so gloried in my fame, and so looked forward to its augmentation until I should be blessed, beloved, and honoured for my labours, well knew that I would labour on. She knew that in my 20 heart, as in all hearts that were great and good, sorrow could not be weakness, but must be strength. As the endurance of my childish days had done its part to make me what I was, so greater calamities would nerve me on, to be yet better than I was and so, as they 25 had taught me, would I teach others. She commended me to God, who had taken my innocent darling to His rest; and in her sisterly affection cherished me always, and was always at my side go where I would, proud of what I had done, but infinitely prouder yet of what 30 I was reserved to do.

I put the letter in my breast, and thought what had I been an hour ago! When I heard the voices die away, and saw the quiet evening cloud grow dim, and all the colours in the valley fade, and the golden snow 35 upon the mountain tops become a remote part of the pale night sky, yet felt that the night was passing from my mind, and all its shadows clearing, there was no name for the love I bore her, dearer to me henceforward than ever until then.

I read her letter, many times. I wrote to her before I slept. I told her that I had been in sore need of her help; that without her I was not, and I never had been, what she thought me; but, that she inspired me to be
5 that, and I would try.

I did try. In three months more, a year would have passed since the beginning of my sorrow. I determined to make no resolutions until the expiration of those three months, but to try. I lived in that valley
10 and its neighbourhood all the time.

The three months gone, I resolved to remain away from home for some time longer; to settle myself for the present in Switzerland, which was growing dear to me in the remembrance of that evening; to resume my
15 pen; to work.

I worked early and late, patiently and hard. I wrote a Story, with a purpose growing, not remotely, out of my experience, and sent it to Traddles, and he arranged for its publication very advantageously for me;
20 and the tidings of my growing reputation began to reach me from travellers whom I encountered by chance. After some rest and change, I fell to work, in my old ardent way, on a new fancy, which took strong possession of me. As I advanced in the execution of this task, I felt
25 it more and more; and roused my utmost energies to do it well. This was my third work of fiction. It was not half written, when, in an interval of rest, I thought of returning home.

For a long time, though studying and working
30 patiently, I had accustomed myself to robust exercise. My health, severely impaired when I left England, was quite restored. I had seen much. I had been in many countries, and I hope I had improved my store of knowledge.

35 I have now recalled all that I think it needful to recall here, of this term of absence—with one reservation. I have made it, thus far, with no purpose of suppressing any of my thoughts, for, as I have elsewhere said, this narrative is my written memory. I have desired to keep

the most secret current of my mind apart, and to the last. I enter on it now.

I cannot so completely penetrate the mystery of my own heart, as to know when I began to think that I might have set its earliest and brightest hopes on Agnes. I cannot say at what stage of my grief it first became associated with the reflection that, in my wayward boyhood, I had thrown away the treasure of her love. I believe I may have heard some whisper of that distant thought, in the old unhappy loss or want of something never to be realised, of which I had been sensible. But the thought came into my mind as a new reproach and new regret, when I was left so sad and lonely in the world.

If, at that time, I had been much with her, I should, in the weakness of my desolation, have betrayed this. It was what I remotely dreaded when I was first impelled to stay away from England. I could not have borne to lose the smallest portion of her sisterly affection; yet, in that betrayal, I should have set a constraint between us hitherto unknown.

I could not forget that the feeling with which she now regarded me had grown up in my own free choice and course. That if she had ever loved me with another love—and I sometimes thought the time was when she might have done so—I had cast it away. It was nothing, now, that I had accustomed myself to think of her, when we were both mere children, as one who was far removed from my child fancies. I had bestowed my passionate tenderness upon another object; and what I might have done, I had not done; and what Agnes was to me, I and her own noble heart had made her.

In the beginning of the change that gradually worked in me when I tried to get a better understanding of myself and be a better man, I did glance, through some indefinite probation, to a period when I might possibly hope to cancel the mistaken past, and to be so blessed as to marry her. But, as time wore on, this shadowy prospect faded, and departed from me. If she had ever loved me, then, I should hold her the more

sacred, remembering the confidences I had reposed in her, her knowledge of my errant heart, the sacrifice she must have made to be my friend and sister, and the victory she had won. If she had never loved me, could
5 I believe that she would love me now?

I had always felt my weakness, in comparison with her constancy and now I felt it more and more. Whatever I might have been to her, or she to me, if I had been more worthy of her long ago, I was not now, and
10 she was not. The time was past. I had let it go by, and had deservedly lost her.

That I suffered much in these contentions, that they filled me with unhappiness and remorse, and yet that I had a sustaining sense that it was required of
15 me, in right and honour, to keep away from myself with shame the thought of turning to the dear girl, in the withering of my hopes, from whom I had frivolously turned when they were bright and fresh—which consideration was at the root of every thought I had
20 concerning her—is all equally true. I made no effort to conceal from myself, now, that I loved her, that I was devoted to her; but I brought the assurance home to myself, that it was now too late, and that our long-subsisting relation must be undisturbed.

25 I had thought, much and often, of my Dora's shadowing out to me what might have happened in those years that were destined not to try us; I had considered how the things that never happen, are often as much realities to us, in their effects, as those that are accomplished. The very years she spoke of, were realities
30 now, for my correction, and would have been, one day, a little later perhaps, though we had parted in our earliest folly. I endeavoured to convert what might have been between myself and Agnes into a means of making
35 me more self-denying, more resolved, more conscious of myself and my defects and errors. Thus, through the reflection that it might have been, I arrived at the conviction that it could never be.

These, with their perplexities and inconsistencies,
40 were the shifting quicksands of my mind, from the time

of my departure to the time of my return home, three years afterwards.

Three years. Long in the aggregate, though short as they went by. And home was very dear to me, and Agnes too—but she was not mine—she was never 5 to be mine—she might have been, but that was past!

RETURN.

“And when, Trot,” said my aunt, patting the back 10 of my hand, as we sat in our old way before the fire, “when are you going over to Canterbury?”

“I shall get a horse, and ride over to-morrow morning, aunt, unless you will go with me?”

“No!” said my aunt, in her short abrupt way. “I 15 mean to stay where I am.”

Then, I should ride, I said. I could not have come through Canterbury to-day without stopping, if I had been coming to any one but her.

She was pleased, but answered: “Tut, Trot; *my* old 20 bones would have kept till to-morrow!” and softly patted my hand again, as I sat looking thoughtfully at the fire.

Thoughtfully, for I could not be here once more, and so near Agnes, without the revival of those regrets 25 with which I had so long been occupied. Softened regrets they might be, teaching me what I had failed to learn when my younger life was all before me, but not the less regrets. “Oh, Trot,” I seemed to hear my aunt say once more; and I understood her better now— 30 “Blind, blind, blind!”

We both kept silence for some minutes. When I raised my eyes, I found that she was steadily observant of me. Perhaps she had followed the current of my mind, for it seemed to me an easy one to track now, 35 wilful as it had been once.

“You will find her father a white-haired old man,” said my aunt, “though a better man in all other respects—a reclaimed man. Neither will you find him measuring all human interests, and joys, and sorrows, with 40

his one poor little inch-rule now. Trust me, child, such things must shrink very much, before they can be measured off in *that* way."

"Indeed they must," said I.

5 "You will find her," pursued my aunt, "as good, as beautiful, as earnest, as disinterested, as she has always been. If I knew higher praise, Trot, I would bestow it on her."

There was no higher praise for her, no higher
10 reproach for me. Oh, how had I strayed so far away!

"If she trains the young girls whom she has about her, to be like herself," said my aunt, earnest even to the filling of her eyes with tears, "Heaven knows, her life will be well employed! Useful and happy, as she
15 said that day! How could she be otherwise than useful and happy?"

"Has Agnes any—" I was thinking aloud, rather than speaking.

"Well? Hey? Any what?" said my aunt, sharply.

20 "Any lover," said I.

"A score," cried my aunt, with a kind of indignant pride. "She might have married twenty times, my dear, since you have been gone!"

"No doubt," said I. "No doubt. But has she any
25 lover who is worthy of her? Agnes could care for no other."

My aunt sat musing for a little while, with her chin upon her hand. Slowly raising her eyes to mine, she said:

30 "I suspect she has an attachment, Trot."

"A prosperous one?" said I.

"Trot," returned my aunt gravely, "I can't say. I have no right to tell you even so much. She has never confided it to me, but I suspect it."

35 She looked so attentively and anxiously at me (I even saw her tremble), that I felt now, more than ever, that she had followed my late thoughts. I summoned all the resolutions I had made, in all those many days and nights, and all those many conflicts of my heart.

40 "If it should be so," I began, "and I hope it is—"

"I don't know that it is," said my aunt curtly. "You must not be ruled by my suspicions. You must keep them secret. They are very slight, perhaps. I have no right to speak."

"If it should be so," I repeated, "Agnes will tell 5 me at her own good time. A sister to whom I have confided so much, aunt, will not be reluctant to confide in me."

My aunt withdrew her eyes from mine, as slowly as she had turned them upon me, and covered them 10 thoughtfully with her hand. By and by she put her other hand on my shoulder, and so we both sat, looking into the past, without saying another word, until we parted for the night.

I rode away, early in the morning, for the scene 15 of my old school days. I cannot say that I was yet quite happy in the hope, that I was gaining a victory over myself, even in the prospect of so soon looking on her face again.

The well-remembered ground was soon traversed, 20 and I came into the quiet streets, where every stone was a boy's book to me. I went on foot to the old house, and went away with a heart too full to enter. I returned, and looking, as I passed, through the low window of the turret-room saw that it was a little parlour 25 now, and that there was no office. Otherwise the staid old house was, as to its cleanliness and order, still just as it had been when I first saw it. I requested the new maid who admitted me, to tell Miss Wickfield that a gentleman who waited on her from a friend abroad, was there; and I was 30 shown up the grave old staircase (cautioned of the steps I knew so well), into the unchanged drawing-room. The books that Agnes and I had read together were on their shelves, and the desk where I had laboured at my lessons, many a night, stood yet at the same old 35 corner of the table. Everything was as it used to be, in the happy time.

I stood in a window, and looked across the ancient street at the opposite houses, recalling how I had watch- 40 ed them on wet afternoons, when I first came there;

and how I had used to speculate about the people who appeared at any of the windows, and had followed them with my eyes up and down-stairs, while women went clicking along the pavement in pattens, and the dull
5 rain fell in slanting lines, and poured out of the water-spout yonder, and flowed into the road. The feeling with which I used to watch the tramps, as they came into the town on those wet evenings, at dusk, and limped past, with their bundles drooping over their
10 shoulders at the ends of sticks, came freshly back to me; fraught, as then, with the smell of damp earth, and wet leaves and briar, and the sensation of the very airs that blew upon me in my own toilsome journey.

The opening of the little door in the panelled wall
15 made me start and turn. Her beautiful serene eyes met mine as she came towards me. She stopped and laid her hand upon her breast, and I caught her in my arms.

“Agnes! my dear girl! I have come too suddenly
20 upon you.”

“No, no! I am so rejoiced to see you, Trotwood!”

“Dear Agnes, the happiness it is to me, to see you once again!”

I folded her to my heart, and for a little while
25 we were both silent. Presently we sat down, side by side; and her angel-face was turned upon me with the welcome I had dreamed of, waking and sleeping, for whole years.

She was so true, she was so beautiful, she was so
30 good,—I owed her so much gratitude, she was so dear to me, that I could find no utterance for what I felt. I tried to bless her, tried to thank her, tried to tell her (as I had often done in letters) what an influence she had upon me; but all my efforts were in vain. My
35 love and joy were dumb.

With her own sweet tranquillity, she calmed my agitation, led me back to the time of our parting, and spoke to me tenderly of Dora's grave. With the unerring instinct of her noble heart, she touched the
40 chords of my memory so softly and harmoniously, that

not one jarred within me; I could listen to the sorrowful, distant music, and desire to shrink from nothing it awoke. How could I, when, blended with it all, was her dear self, the better angel of my life?

"And you, Agnes," I said, by and by. "Tell me 5 of yourself. You have hardly ever told me of your own life, in all this lapse of time!"

"What should I tell?" she answered, with her radiant smile. "Papa is well. You see us here, quiet in our own home; our anxieties set at rest, our home 10 restored to us; and knowing that, dear Trotwood, you know all."

"All, Agnes?" said I.

She looked at me, with some fluttering wonder in her face. 15

"Is there nothing else, Sister?" I said.

Her colour, which had just now faded, returned, and faded again. She smiled, with a quiet sadness, I thought; and shook her head.

I had sought to lead her to what my aunt had 20 hinted at; for, sharply painful to me as it must be to receive that confidence, I was to discipline my heart, and do my duty to her. I saw, however, that she was uneasy, and I let it pass.

AGNES.

Christmas-time being come, and Agnes having reposed no new confidence in me, a doubt that had several times arisen in my mind—whether she could have that 30 perception of the true state of my breast, which restrained her with the apprehension of giving me pain—began to oppress me heavily. If that were so, my sacrifice was nothing, my plainest obligation to her unfulfilled, and every poor action I had shrunk from, I was hourly 35 doing. I resolved to set this right beyond all doubt;—if such a barrier were between us, to break it down at once with a determined hand.

How well I recollect the wintry ride! The frozen particles of ice, brushed from the blades of grass by the 40

wind, and borne across my face; the hard clatter of the horse's hoof, beating a tune upon the ground; the stiff-tilled soil; the snow-drift, lightly eddying in the chalk-pit as the breeze ruffled it; the smoking team with the
5 waggon of old hay, stopping to breathe on the hill-top, and shaking their bells musically; the whitened slopes and sweeps of Down-land lying against the dark sky, as if they were drawn on a huge slate!

I found Agnes alone. The little girls had gone to
10 their own homes now, and she was alone by the fire, reading. She put down her book on seeing me come in, and having welcomed me as usual, took her work-basket and sat in one of the old-fashioned windows.

I sat beside her on the window-seat, and we talked
15 of what I was doing, and when it would be done, and of the progress I had made since my last visit. Agnes was very cheerful, and laughingly predicted that I should soon become too famous to be talked to, on such subjects.

20 "So I make the most of the present time, you see," said Agnes, "and talk to you while I may."

As I looked at her beautiful face, observant of her work, she raised her mild clear eyes, and saw that I was looking at her.

25 "You are thoughtful to-day, Trotwood!"

"Agnes, shall I tell you what about? I came to tell you?"

She put aside her work, as she was used to do when we were seriously discussing anything, and gave
30 me her whole attention.

"My dear Agnes, do you doubt my being true to you?"

"No!" she answered, as before.

"Do you remember that I tried to tell you, when
35 I came home, what a debt of gratitude I owed you, dearest Agnes, and how fervently I felt towards you?"

"I remember it," she said gently, "very well."

"You have a secret," said I. "Let me share it, Agnes."

40 She cast down her eyes, and trembled.

"I could hardly fail to know, even if I had not heard—but from other lips than yours, Agnes, which seems strange—that there is some one upon whom you have bestowed the treasure of your love. Do not shut me out of what concerns your happiness so nearly! 5 If you can trust me, as you say you can, and as I know you may, let me be your friend, your brother, in this matter, of all others!"

With an appealing, almost a reproachful glance, she rose from the window, and hurrying across the 10 room as if without knowing where, put her hands before her face, and burst into such tears as smote me to the heart.

And yet they awakened something in me, bringing promise to my heart. Without my knowing why, these 15 tears allied themselves with the quietly sad smile which was so fixed in my remembrance, and shook me more with hope than fear or sorrow.

"Agnes! Sister! Dearest! What have I done?"

"Let me go away, Trotwood. I am not well. I 20 am not myself. I will speak to you by and by—another time, I will write to you. Don't speak to me now. Don't! don't!"

I sought to recollect what she had said, when I had spoken to her on that former night, of her affection 25 needing no return. It seemed a very world that I must search through in a moment.

"Agnes, I cannot bear to see you so, and think that I have been the cause. My dearest girl, dearer to me than anything in life, if you are unhappy, let me 30 share your unhappiness. If you are in need of help or counsel, let me try to give it to you. If you have indeed a burden on your heart, let me try to lighten it. For whom do I live now, Agnes, if it is not for you?"

"Oh, spare me! I am not myself! Another time!" 35 was all I could distinguish.

Was it a selfish error that was leading me away? Or, having once a clue to hope, was there something opening to me that I had not dared to think of?

"I must say more. I cannot let you leave me so! For Heaven's sake, Agnes, let us not mistake each other after all these years, and all that has come and gone with them! I must speak plainly. If you have any
5 lingering thought that I could envy the happiness you will confer; that I could not resign you to a dearer protector, of your own choosing; that I could not, from my removed place, be a contented witness of your joy; dismiss it, for I don't deserve it! I have not suffered
10 quite in vain. You have not taught me quite in vain. There is no alloy of self in what I feel for you."

She was quiet now. In a little time, she turned her pale face towards me, and said in a low voice, broken here and there, but very clear:

15 "I owe it to your pure friendship for me, Trotwood—which, indeed, I do not doubt—to tell you, you are mistaken. I can do no more. If I have sometimes, in the course of years, wanted help and counsel, they have come to me. If I have sometimes been unhappy,
20 the feeling has passed away. If I have ever had a burden on my heart, it has been lightened for me. If I have any secret, it is—no new one, and is—not what you suppose. I cannot reveal it or divide it. It has long been mine, and must remain mine."

25 "Agnes! Stay! A moment!"

She was going away, but I detained her. I clasped my arm about her waist. "In the course of years!" "It is not a new one!" New thoughts and hopes were whirl-
30 ing through my mind, and all the colours of my life were changing.

"Dearest Agnes! Whom I so respect and honour—whom I so devotedly love! When I came here to-day, I thought that nothing could have wrested this confession from me. I thought I could have kept it in my
35 bosom all our lives, till we were old. But, Agnes, if I have indeed any new-born hope that I may ever call you something more than Sister, widely different from Sister!—"

Her tears fell fast, but they were not like those she
40 had lately shed, and I saw my hope brighten in them.

“Agnes! Ever my guide, and best support! If you had been more mindful of yourself, and less of me, when we grew up here together, I think my heedless fancy never would have wandered from you. But you were so much better than I, so necessary to me in every boyish hope and disappointment, that to have you to confide in and rely upon, in everything, became a second nature, supplanting for the time the first and greater one of loving you as I do!” 5

Still weeping, but not sadly—joyfully! And clasped in my arms as she had never been, as I had thought she never was to be! 10

“When I loved Dora—fondly, Agnes, as you know—”

“Yes!” she cried, earnestly. “I am glad to know it!” 15

“When I loved her—even then, my love would have been incomplete, without your sympathy. I had it, and it was perfected. And when I lost her, Agnes, what should I have been without you, still!”

Closer in my arms, nearer to my heart, her trembling hand upon my shoulder, her sweet eyes shining through her tears, on mine! 20

“I went away, dear Agnes, loving you. I stayed away, loving you. I returned home, loving you!”

And now, I tried to tell her of the struggle I had had, and the conclusion I had come to. I tried to lay my mind before her, truly, and entirely. I tried to show her how I had hoped I had come into the better knowledge of myself and of her; how I had resigned myself to what that better knowledge brought; and how I had come there, even that day, in my fidelity to this. If she did so love me (I said) that she could take me for her husband, she could do so, on no deserving of mine, except upon the truth of my love for her, and the trouble in which it had ripened to be what it was; and hence it was that I revealed it. And, o Agnes, even out of thy true eyes, in that same time, the spirit of my child-wife looked upon me, saying it was well, and winning me, through thee, to tenderest recollections of the Blossom that had withered in its bloom! 35 40

"I am so blest, Trotwood — my heart is so over-charged—but there is one thing I must say."

"Dearest, what?"

She laid her gentle hands upon my shoulders, and
5 looked calmly in my face.

"Do you know, yet, what it is?"

"I am afraid to speculate on what it is. Tell me, my dear."

"I have loved you all my life!"

10 O, we were happy, we were happy! Our tears were not for the trials (hers so much the greater), through which we had come to be thus, but for the rapture of being thus, never to be divided more!

We walked, that winter evening, in the fields together,
15 and the blessed calm within us seemed to be partaken by the frosty air. The early stars began to shine while we were lingering on, and looking up to them we thanked our God for having guided us to this tranquillity.

20 We were married within a fortnight. Clapsed in my embrace, I held the source of every worthy aspiration I had ever had, the centre of myself, the circle of my life, my own, my wife; my love of whom was founded on a rock!

25 "Dearest husband!" said Agnes. "Now that I may call you by that name, I have one thing more to tell you."

"Let me hear it, love."

"It grows out of the night when Dora died. She
30 sent you for me."

"She did."

"She told me that she left me something. Can you think what it was?"

I believed I could. I drew the wife who had so
35 long loved me, closer to my side.

"She told me that she made a last request to me, and left me a last charge."

"And it was—"

"That only I would occupy this vacant place."

And Agnes laid her head upon my breast, and wept, and I wept with her, though we were so happy.

* *

And now, as I close my task, subduing my desire⁵ to linger yet, all other faces fade away. But, one face, shining on me like a Heavenly light by which I see all other objects, is above them and beyond them all. And that remains.

I turn my head, and see it, in its beautiful serenity,¹⁰ beside me. My lamp burns low, and I have written far into the night, but the dear presence, without which I were nothing, bears me company.

O Agnes, o my soul, so may thy face be by me when I close my life indeed; so may I, when realities¹⁵ are melting from me like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upward!

III.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

AND

DORA — AN IDYL

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

I.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gaily,
 'If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
 And I think thou lov'st me well.'
She replies, in accents fainter, 5
 'There is none I love like thee.'
He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof: 10
Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father's roof.
'I can make no marriage present:
 Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant, 15
 And I love thee more than life.'
They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand:
Summer woods, about them blowing,
 Made a murmur in the land. 20
From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
'Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
So she goes, by him attended, 25
 Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great, 30

Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer:
Evermore she seems to gaze
5 On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly!
He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
10 When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns;
15 Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before:
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
20 When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
25 Proudly turns he round and kindly,
'All of this is mine and thine.'
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
30 Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin:
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
35 Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove:
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
40 Tho' at times her spirit sank:

Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
 To all duties of her rank:
 And a gentle consort made he,
 And her gentle mind was such
 That she grew a noble lady, 5
 And the people loved her much.
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honour
 Unto which she was not born. 10
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
 And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he
 Were once more that landscape-painter,
 Which did win my heart from me!' 15
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
 Fading slowly from his side:
 Three fair children first she bore him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down, 20
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 'Bring the dress and put it on her, 25
 That she wore when she was wed.'
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest. 30

II.

DORA — AN IDYL.

With farmer Allan at the farm abode 35
 William and Dora. William was his son,
 And she his niece. He often looked at them,
 And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
 And yearned towards William; but the youth, because 40

He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
When Allan called his son, and said: "My son,
5 I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too, beyond her age.
10 She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wished this marriage, night and day,
15 For many years." But William answered short:
"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
20 But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it:
Consider, William; take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
25 And never more darken my doors again!"
But William answered madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he looked at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
30 The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan called
35 His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
40 "It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change."

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he passed his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father helped him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save, 5
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest-time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And looked with tears upon her boy, and thought 10
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
"I have obeyed my uncle until now,
And I have sinned, for it was all through me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone, 15
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye 20
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound 25
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him, 30
But her heart failed her; and the reapers reaped,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers 35
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer passed into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,

- And came and said, "Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? what are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answered softly, "This is William's child."
5 "And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
"Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."
And Allan said: „I see it is a trick
10 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."
- 15 So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bowed down her head,
20 Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bowed down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reaped,
And the sun fell, and the land was dark.

- Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
25 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that helped her in her widowhood.
And Dora said: "My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
30 He says that he will never see me more."
Then answered Mary: "This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
35 His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back:
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,

And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us."

So the women kissed
Each other, and set out, and reached the farm.
The door was off the latch; they peeped, and saw 5
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapped him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him; and the lad stretched out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung 10
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in; but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

"O Father! if you let me call you so— 15
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I asked him, and he said, 20
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
The troubles I have gone through!' Then he turned 25
His face and passed—unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before." 30

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs: —
"I have been to blame—to blame! I have killed my son!
I have killed him—but I loved him—my dear son! 35
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kissed him many times.

And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundred-fold;
And for three hours he sobbed o'er William's child,
Thinking of William.

5 So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

CROSSING THE BAR.

10 Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

 But such a tide as moving seems asleep
Too full for sound and foam,
15 When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

 Twilight and evening bell
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
20 When I embark;

 For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. THE SNOW-IMAGE.

Der Dichter legt in seine anmutige Erzählung selbst die Lehre hinein, daß man beim besten Willen oft mehr schaden als nützen kann, wenn man nicht genau alle Umstände in Betracht zieht, unter denen man eine Wohlthat erweisen will, und diese ganz nach der Natur desjenigen einrichtet, dem man helfen will. Was dem einen heilsam ist, kann dem andern verderblich sein.

1 (zu 3, 10) Das Wort *phiz* ist aus *physiognomy* entstanden. Ähnliche Verstümmelungen, welche von mehreren Silben nur die erste (selten die letzte) übrig lassen, und vorzugsweise in der gewöhnlichen Umgangssprache gebraucht werden, sind: *bap* = baptism, *biz* = business, *bus* = omnibus, *cab* = cabriolet, *Cantab* = Cantabrigian (Student aus Cambridge), *cit* = citizen, *con* = contra, *coz* = cousin, *div* = dividend, *exam* = examination, *gent* = gentleman, *gov* = governor, *hock* = Hochheimer (Weißwein), *hyp* = hypochondria, *incog* = incognito, *mem* = memorandum, *mob* = mobile vulgus (Pöbel), *navvy* = navigator, *nob* = nobleman, *photo* = photograph, *prop* = property, *reb* = rebel, *rip* = reprobate, *San Fran* oder *Frisko* = San Francisco, *sov* = sovereign, *spec* = spectacles oder speculation, *thou* = thousand, *zoo* = zoological garden.

2 (zu 4, 15) Das Wort *worsted* kommt von einem Orte (jetzt *Worstead*) in Norfolk, der sich durch Wollenweberei auszeichnete.

3 (zu 4, 17) *Jack Frost* ist eine vielleicht aus der skandinavischen Mythologie stammende Persönlichkeit, welche die Kälte verkörpern soll, also „der Kältemann“.

4 (zu 4, 18) *with a hop-skip-and-jump* kommt in einem schottischen Volkslied vor und soll eigentlich bedeuten: „mit drei Sprüngen, erst mit dem rechten, dann mit dem linken Fuß und zuletzt mit beiden Füßen.“

5 (zu 18, 8) *eighty degrees* achtzig Grad, nämlich nach Fahrenheit (über 20 Grad Réaumur). Man führt es scherzhaft als einen Beweis für die Wahrheit des Sprüchwortes: „Der Prophet gilt nichts in seinem Vaterlande“ an, daß die Skala des Deutschen Fahrenheit besonders in England und Amerika, die des Franzosen Réaumur in Deutschland und die des Schweden Celsius in Frankreich üblich ist.

2. DORA AND AGNES.

Dora Spenlow und Agnes Wickfield sind die beiden Frauen, welche in David Copperfields Leben eingreifen. An Agnes ist er durch eine gemeinsam verlebte Kindheit sowie durch die Bande der Dankbarkeit und Freundschaft gefesselt; doch gewinnt die lebhaftere, mit glänzenderen Eigenschaften ausgestattete Dora beim ersten Anblick sein Herz und wird seine Frau. Bald jedoch stellt es sich heraus, daß sie nicht das geringste Verständnis für seine Natur und sein Streben hat, und bei der Oberflächlichkeit ihres Charakters kann sie weder seinem tieferen Herzensbedürfnis genügen noch sein äußeres Leben glücklich gestalten. Da aber die junge Frau ihrem Gatten in herzlicher Liebe und Treue ergeben ist und den besten Willen zeigt, ihre Pflichten zu erfüllen, ist die Ehe trotz mancher Widerwärtigkeiten keine unglückliche, und als Dora nach langem Krankenlager stirbt, ist die Erschütterung ihres Mannes eine tiefe und nachhaltige. Nach mehrjährigem Aufenthalt in der Fremde, wo er sich wieder gesammelt hat und sein Charakter zu männlicher Reife herangediehen ist, wird er der seiner ersten Frau an Bildung des Herzens und Tiefe des Gemütes weit überlegenen Agnes wieder zugeführt, und diese, die ihn von Anfang an geliebt hat, begründet zuletzt dauerhaft das Glück seines Lebens.

6 (zu 23, 1) David ist bei den *Doctors Commons* (einer Art Gerichtshof, dessen Vorsteher Mr. Spenlow ist) kontraktlich aufgenommen worden. (Der Kontrakt, der aus Paragraphen oder Artikeln besteht, heißt auch *articles*, davon das Verb *to article*.)

7 (zu 23, 3) *Norwood* ist ein Vorort im Süden von London.

8 (zu 26, 18) Unter Picknick versteht man (auch bei uns) einen Schmaus im Freien, zu dem jeder Teilnehmer etwas beisteuert (vgl. 19).

9 (zu 26, 28) *Covent Garden Market*, der größte Blumenmarkt in London.

10 (zu 30, 29) Copperfield schreibt seine Erinnerungen als älterer Mann und Vater mehrerer Kinder (vgl. S. 83, 3).

11 (zu 31, 16) Miss Mills liebt schwärmerische Ausdrücke dieser Art und wendet sie besonders in ihrem Tagebuche an.

12 (zu 31, 30) Davids Tante, die an ihm Mutterstelle vertritt, hat ihr Vermögen verloren; so sind auch des Neffen Aussichten für die Zukunft sehr getrübt, und er muß ein neues Leben nach sparsameren und strengeren Grundsätzen beginnen.

13 (zu 32, 14) Fast jeder besser gestellte Engländer gehört einem Klub (d. i. einem geschlossenen Verein zu Geselligkeitszwecken) an und kann von diesem in Strafe genommen werden, wenn er sich etwas (wie hier eine Verspätung) gegen die Statuten zu Schulden kommen läßt.

14 (zu 34, 11) *Highgate*, Vorstadt im NW. von London.

15 (zu 35, 6) *the Prerogative Court* ist das Gericht des Erzbischofs von Canterbury (für Erbschaftssachen).

16 (zu 39, 36) *Putney*, Vorstadt im SW. von London.

17 (zu 42, 24) Dora's Vater war ganz plötzlich in Folge eines Schlaganfalles gestorben.

18 (zu 43, 1) D. ist als tüchtiger Stenograph von einer Morgenzeitung als Berichterstatter (*reporter*) für die Parlamentsdebatten angestellt worden. Als solcher muß er sämtlichen Sitzungen beiwohnen, eine ihm sehr wenig zusagende Thätigkeit, die er, als er in bessere Verhältnisse gekommen ist, sofort aufgibt (vgl. 58, 32).

19 (zu 43, 28) Peggotty spielt in Dickens' Roman eine hervorragende Rolle. Sie wird als das Muster eines treuen Dienstboten geschildert. Ihr Bruder durchwandert die Straßen, um seine Nichte wiederzufinden, die von James Steerforth, dem ehemaligen Freunde Copperfields, entführt ist. Den Verlust dieses Freundes meint C. später, als er von den Schicksalsschlägen spricht, die ihn betroffen haben (66, 36).

20 (zu 45, 13) Mit seiner alten Wirtin, Mrs. Crupp, hat David auch manchen Ärger gehabt.

21 (zu 46, 34) Der Ritter Blaubart (aus einem französischen Märchen) tötete bekanntlich seine sechs Frauen.

22 (zu 48, 38) Die Tante, eine etwas schrullenhafte, aber dabei vortreffliche Frau, nennt ihren Neffen *Trot* (abgekürzt aus ihrem eigenen Namen *Betsey Trotwood*).

23 (zu 50, 27) Anspielung auf ein bekanntes Gedicht '*the three Babes in the Wood*'.

24 (zu 51, 27) *Kentisch Town*, südwestliche Vorstadt von London.

25 (zu 52, 26) Tommy Traddles spielt ebenfalls eine große Rolle in unserm Roman. Er wird als ein sehr gutmütiger und harmloser Mensch geschildert, mit gesundem Menschenverstand und trockenem Humor.

26 (zu 61, 16) Die Tanten sind die beiden unverheirateten Schwestern Mr. Spenlow's, in deren Hause Dora die Zeit von dem plötzlichen Tode ihres Vaters bis zu ihrer Hochzeit zugebracht hat.

27 (zu 63, 30) Joh. 11, 35 „Und Jesus gingen die Augen über“ (an der Leiche des Lazarus).

28 (zu 73, 31) Denselben Ausdruck hatte die Tante früher bei Gelegenheit seiner Verlobung mit Dora gebraucht (ohne ihm jedoch direkt abzuraten).

29 (zu 73, 37) Agnes' Vater war Rechtsanwalt in Canterbury. Er war, obgleich ein herzensguter Mann, dem Laster des Trunkes ergeben gewesen und dadurch in sehr mißliche Verhältnisse

geraten. Jetzt hatte er sich gebessert, und alles war wieder gut geworden. In seinem Hause hatte David einen Teil seiner Kindheit verlebt.

30 (zu 74, 11) Agnes hat eine Mädchenschule gegründet, an der sie „nützlich und glücklich“ ist (vgl. 69, 7).

31 (zu 76, 13) Erinnerungen an die Reise, die David als armes, hilfloses Kind auf seiner Flucht von London zurückgelegt hatte.

3. THE LORD OF BURLEIGH, DORA, AND CROSSING THE BAR.

Die beiden ersten Gedichte, die sich durch große Einfachheit auszeichnen und ohne weiteres verständlich sind, führen uns drei edle Frauengestalten vor. Im *Lord of Burleigh* liegt der Schwerpunkt in den Versen 12—14, in denen die aus niedrigem Stande hervorgegangene Lady die Pracht, von der sie umgeben ist, und die weltliche Größe ihres Mannes für nichts achtet gegenüber seiner Liebe. Dora und Mary gleichen sich an Edelmut und echt weiblichem Sinn; doch ist Dora der bedeutendere und tiefer angelegte Charakter (vgl. das Ende des Gedichts).

Crossing the Bar giebt uns die Vorstellung, die sich der Dichter von seinem Übergange ins Jenseits macht, den er mit einer Ausfahrt aus dem Hafen in den weiten Ozean vergleicht. Die erhabene und weihevollen Stimmung, welche über das ganze Gedicht ausgegossen ist, gewinnt namentlich in den letzten Versen einen ergreifenden Ausdruck.

32 (zu 92, 8). Unter *bar* versteht man zunächst eine etwas absperrende Stange, einen Balken, Riegel u. s. w., hier sowohl im eigentlichen Sinne die Barre (eine Sandbank oder Felsenreihe vor einem Hafen), als auch übertragen die Schranke, welche das Leben vom Tode, die Endlichkeit von der Unendlichkeit trennt. Es soll kein Ächzen und Stöhnen der Barre (wie bei zu flachem Wasserstande) sein, noch ein Brausen und Schäumen (wie bei zu hohem); die Flut soll sich bewegen, aber doch zu schlafen scheinen, d. h. der Übergang soll ein sanfter und leichter sein und die Klage des Abschieds verstummen.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel, / Hawthorne, Nathaniel, / Dickens, Charles,

The snow-image

Berlin 1895

P.o.angl. 19 k-3

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